

Importance of Night Dreams in Ibsen's Plays

A Psychoanalytic study of *The Vikings of
Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*

Nino Bardzimashvili



Mphil Thesis in Ibsen Studies
Centre for Ibsen Studies Faculty of Humanities

UNIVERSITETET I OSLO

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Abstract

The topic for my thesis is the importance of night dreams in Henrik Ibsen's plays. My study of the subject is based on two plays, *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*. The first one is a historical play written in 1857 and is usually discussed in relationship with nationalism and the political events in 19th century Norway. The second one is known as a "family romance" and was written in 1894. These two plays represent different periods of Henrik Ibsen's writing and hence it is possible to observe the changing author's viewpoint on various subjects; however both texts contain night dreams.

In my thesis I have presented a psychoanalytical analysis of *The Vikings of Helgeland* and of *Little Eyolf*. In order to give a comprehensive picture of the importance of dreams in Ibsen's works I have focused not only on night dreams out of context with the rest of the text but on a number of aspects that are connected to these plays such as historical, biographical, cultural, political, social and moral. To prepare a solid basis for my research I have studied articles and books related to the subject, explored Icelandic sagas, gained deeper insight into the Theory of Psychoanalysis, the theory of Self-conscious Emotions, meanings of symbols and, of course, thoroughly examined Ibsen's original texts.

My research has led me to the conclusion that night dreams in *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf* are of great significance for the understanding of the characters' mental, emotional and moral state and of their reasons for their actions and decisions. The use of dreams proves once more Ibsen's skills as a great writer and an expert of the human mind and psychology.

Dedicated to the memory of my father

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1 Introduction and the history of the study of the subject

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Topic

Every literary work, despite its genre, epoch or origins touches upon human nature and life. Any writer who has ever become important and valuable as an author and as an artist, shows unremitting interest and high skills in the understanding of what it really is to be a human being and to deal with all the challenges and surprises that life offers us. When I interact with a work of art, those are the essential aspects I try to find. How well the author manages to understand and show human psychology plays a crucial role in determining the value of this work. When I read Henrik Ibsen's writings they impressed me, in the first place, for their deep insights regarding the psychology of humankind. Ibsen seemed to touch upon the most important and sensitive topics with which a person could be dealing and to display in daylight even the bitterest truth that one would usually try to hide in the deepest corners of his heart and mind. It is without a doubt that Henrik Ibsen is a great wordsmith, a philosopher and a master when it comes to comprehending the different personalities and their interaction. There are number of topics and themes in his plays one could write about in order to explore different conflicts and issues of various people and their lives; however, what I chose as the subject of my thesis is night dreams in Ibsen's plays.

The reason why I select night dreams as the centre of my research is that they are particularly important in understanding human psychology and in uncovering their true nature. Studying the subconscious side of person is as important as his conscious acts and decisions. Every individual consists of a composition of conscious and subconscious elements from which, according to psychoanalysts, the subconscious is the leading force. A night dream is a window to a person's subconscious; thus it is an effective way for a writer to add intricacy and intensity to a character and, correspondingly, to a plot.

In this research it is intended to explore the importance of night dreams in Ibsen's plays, their role and how they affect the reality and characters in the plays, what symbols they carry and how they are related to the individual's subconscious and conscious. I also examine what the use of night dreams in the plays says about Henrik Ibsen as a writer and as an expert of the human mind.

1.1.2 Research question and structure

Night dreams are found in many literary writings from different times and countries. None would find it original or peculiar to an author to use dreams in his works; however the way he uses them can become an interesting subject for research. In addition to the main purpose of this thesis, which is to study the place of night dreams in the development of characters and plot, their symbolic meanings and Ibsen's skills as a writer through the prism of psychoanalysis, I also wish to show how the writer deals with night dreams in different periods of his creative work.

For this reason I choose two plays as my major sources: *The Vikings at Helgeland* (original title in Norwegian is *Hærmændene på Helgeland*) and *Little Eyolf* (original title in Norwegian is *Lille Eyolf*). The first was written in 1858, making it one of the first works of Henrik Ibsen, and is known as a historical drama. The second dates from 1894 and is one of the last works of Ibsen. It is known as a "family romance" and belongs to the Realist Cycle of Ibsen's works which starts with *The Pillars of Society* from 1877 (original title in Norwegian is *Samfundets Støtter*) and end with *When we dead awaken* from 1899 (original title in Norwegian is *Når Vi Døde Vågner*). There certainly is a long period between 1858 and 1894, hence Henrik Ibsen must have developed as a writer and a thinker during this period. His opinions and viewpoints would have changed as well. However, his interest in human psychology and relationships between the opposite or same the sex remained. Therefore both plays give us an equal possibility to observe these issues. And above all, the reason that most interest me is they are appropriate material for this research as both contain night dreams.

I must note here that not many of Ibsen's plays contain night dreams. Historical plays are better sources in this case. For example, *Emperor and Galilean* (original title in Norwegian is

Kejser og Galilæer), 1877, which was written at the end of Ibsen's Historical Cycle, is rich in dreams. We cannot say the same about any play from the Realist Cycle. *Little Eyolf* is a rare example of a realistic play where we find a night dream. The reason why I choose *The Vikings at Helgeland* rather than *Emperor and Galilean* is that the first represents Ibsen's earlier writings and thus allows me to have a wider perspective over his whole work. Besides, it contains only one night dream which makes it more significant as it plays a considerable role in the main conflict.

In this thesis I will analyze two plays of Henrik Ibsen, *The Vikings at Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*, focusing on night dreams. The main characters, relationships or development of events will be discussed in connection with dreams; the two plays will be analyzed separately but both analyses will cover the mentioned issues. I will review the historical period of *The Vikings at Helgeland* since it plays an important role in understanding this play. I will also go through various articles, books and other materials that are directly or indirectly related to the use of night dreams in Ibsen's works. Exploring the plays from a psychoanalytical perspective is the main task of the thesis. This puts the research on the right track when it comes to the interpretation of night dreams. Symbols and their meanings are topics that will be studied and presented in the thesis. In this way night dreams will be fully and thoroughly explored and I will give a complete picture of the importance and meaning they carry, as well as how they help us to see Henrik Ibsen as a writer and therefore add value to his works.

1.2 The study of the subject

1.2.1 Significance and previous research in Ibsen's scholarly milieu

The reason why I chose the mentioned subject as my research question is that it has not been thoroughly studied yet and therefore it lives a open space for a new exploration. Ibsen scholars deeply examine various details and nuances in Ibsens works but when it comes to night dreams, they barely touch the topic or live it completely out of discussion. While reading number of articles and books on Henrik Ibsens dramas from the very beginning of my studies I noticed that night dreams were almost never approached as valuable clues or keys that could help open a new vision about the characters or the happenings in the plays. This brought me closer to the idea of starting this research.

The main difficulty I encountered was the lack of material that directly referred to the night dreams in Ibsen's plays especially about the two plays I chose to study in my thesis. However, it does not mean that dreams have never been discussed by Ibsen scholars.

Hans Aaraas has written a complete book about dreams in *Peer Gynt: En drøm om en drømmer og hans drøm* (Aaraas 1995). In this book he goes really deep into the text and studies many aspects of dreams given in it, such as: the aesthetic, symbolic, psychological and so on. The book consists of four major parts with several chapters in each that concentrate on different issues. Aaraas analyzes dreams, such as dreams during sleep and dreams such as wishes and desires. He raises very interesting questions about dreams, as not only the production of a protagonist's mind but also as Ibsen's reflected thoughts. He analyzes dreams and dreams in dreams. To give a more clear image of this, I'll quote from his book:

Som tittelen sier har vi med to drømmere å gjøre. Den første er det ibsenske dikterjeg. Det er grunnleggende for hele verket, altomfattende og verkseksternt, men samtidig innvevet I det totale språkverk hvorved det eksisterer. Den annen drømmer, Peer, er verksintern og eksisterer bare i den førstes drøm... (ibid.:23).

As we can assume from Aaraas's words, the first dream he is talking about is Ibsen's dream or story, created by him and the other dream is Peer Gynt's dream which only exists in the story that comes from Ibsen. Aaraas explains the title of the book as an interaction between

Ibsen's and Peer Gynt's dreams ("samspillet mellom den ibsenske og den gyntske drøm" (ibid.:25). The author considers the dream in *Peer Gynt* as a way to escape reality, "Å drømme seg fra livet" (ibid.:31), this expression means that one is dreaming of a better life, different from the real one. At the same time this dream is a way to find oneself out of the dream to reality, just as Peer finds a distance to the Peer who has lived out of the dream ("...avstand til den Peer som har "levet seg bort fra drømmen" (ibid.:79). Aaraas makes a very interesting interpretation of understanding the episode of Peer in the hall of the mountain king or Dovregubbens Hall and of the episode with Bøygen. He also speaks about the meaning of Solveig's existence in the play. He associates her with Peer's mother and considers her to be his mother in a way. Aaraas gives us an explanation of some symbols used in *Peer Gynt*. For example, he links the reindeer to a horse and through this to Pegasus and says that it has an erotic meaning and also of freedom and power. He charges Solveig and her room where she is waiting for Peer with a sacral meaning. According to his explanation, Solveig's song is also full of symbols. It makes the room the centre of the world and of Peer's world and means that he has to come back.

There is much more to say about Aaraas's book, but the mentioned issues are those that can be useful for the research, first of all, because the author touches upon not just day dreams but night dreams as well and these are the main subject of my project; on the other hand, he gives explanations of the symbols which is essential for the interpretation of the character's dreams and of the understanding of his personality and subconscious desires and, last but not least, the book helps to define the boarders between night dreams, day dreams, imagination and fantasies, all of which helps us to be on a right track when exploring the text. Another reason why this book is important for my project is that it gives me the possibility to develop research about influence of night dreams on character's real life and future. Even though Aaraas does not concentrate on this subject, his research opens a window to this step of understanding the importance of dreams.

Sir Harold Jeffreys Emeritus also speaks about dreams in *Peer Gynt* in his article "*Some Points in the Interpretation of Peer Gynt*", published in *Scandinavica, An international magazine of Scandinavian studies*, May 1964. He presents Peer as a dreamer: "In fact, Peer is a dreamer in every sense; his ability to distinguish between reality, daydream and nightmare is warped." (Jeffrey 1964:56). According to Jeffrey Emeritus, the reason why *Peer Gynt* creates an imaginary world and life for himself and tells stories about his grandeur and

courage, is the misery and poverty of his real life. This dream of a glorious life is so strong that it stimulates Peer Gynt to act in reality like a hero in his fantasy. The article mentions that Peer's family conditions and childhood experiences also have to do with his active imagination, dreams and fantasies. Jeffreys Emeritus notes that Peer Gynt "is not original in his imagination; he dislikes being called a liar, but he detests being found out as a plagiarist." (ibid.:56) This is one of the main reasons why this article is important for my research. It points to folk stories and symbols which are so naturally rooted in people's minds that they appear in their dreams and fantasies as their own. In spite of the fact that the article does not go deep into this aspect, it gives a good base for future research on folk symbols and stories in Ibsen's plays which is a part of my project since it is linked to dream symbolism. The article will benefit the project in other ways too as it underlines Peer Gynt's inability to set borders between reality and dreams, it becomes a good support when arguing that dreams, both, day and night dreams, are powerful and dramatic forces which can interact with reality and actually change it.

In Andrey Yuriev's article – "*Ibsen's school composition 'En Drøm' and the significance of its theme and imagery in his mature works*" (Yuriev 2007), I found that "Ibsen wrote an essay while he was a pupil at a private school in Skien, and a version of it has been preserved" (ibid.: 22). The title of the essay was "*En drøm*" (A dream). According to Yuriev, the essay shows Ibsen's good knowledge of Christianity and the Bible, because the theme of his essay is Jacob's dream from the Bible. Of course, neither essay nor the article have a direct link to my topic, but they can be useful as, like Yuriev says, "Certain images of this essay are also reproduced in his later works, though not so obviously" (Yuriev 2007:23). He gives examples, such as: angel which appears in *John Gabriel Borkman* and *When we dead awaken*. Yuriev notes that "In a large number of Ibsen's plays, a latent meaning of reality reveals itself precisely in dreams" (ibid.:23). This statement supports the opinion which is developed in my thesis about dreams importance in understanding reality in Ibsen's plays.

After reviewing sources which concern dreams and fantasies in Ibsen's works, it is easy to see that researchers mostly write about day dreams, wishes and desires and not much about night dreams. I can even go farther and say that night dreams are barely explored and when discussed, they are not analyzed and studied deeply, especially when it comes to their influence on characters and on their decisions. Night dreams in Ibsen's plays are not analyzed from a psychoanalytic point of view and they are not given the importance they deserve. This

fact already outlines the significance of the following research, as it offers to the Ibsen scholarly milieu a new perspective about the usage of night dreams in Ibsen's creative work.

1.2.2 Previous research on night dreams in world literature

By reason of not having enough material on the night dreams in Ibsen's plays, I had to refer to other sources in order to learn previous experience in studying night dreams in literature and create an efficient foundation on which I can base my statements. I will review several sources that proved to be the most useful in the preparation for writing this thesis.

Reading Dreams, The Interpretation of dreams from Chaucer to Shakespeare (Brown 1999) edited by Peter Brown, is the main source. This book contains research of important scholars such as Peter Holland, Steven Kruger, Kathryn Lynch and A. C. Spearing, who, as the editor notes are "well known for their distinguished studies of Medieval and Renaissance dreams". (*Brown 1999, editor's preface*) As the editor notes in his preface, this book intends to be interdisciplinary in order to cover various areas of the studying of dreams, based on different analytical methods and diverse theories. It includes not only literary, but, also, non-literary material which serves the main purpose which is "To make the cultural study of dreams interesting and challenging". (ibid.)

Articles presented in the book mostly concern the period from Medieval to Early Modern times. They offer the reader interesting studies of dreams in literature from different centuries and these studies are closely connected to the theory of psychoanalysis, especially to Sigmund Freud.

The book has a very interesting introduction by A.C. Spearing, professor of Medieval Literature at the University of Virginia, who has written a number of books and articles about Medieval Literature. He gives an exact and clear definition of a dream: "Dreaming is a form of sleeping experience that stimulates the waking experience: it occupies the whole field of consciousness and is extended (however illogically) in the dimensions of space and time:"(Spearing 1999:1). He notes that one cannot control when to dream, what to dream or whether to dream or not. Dreams often becomes a part of a writer's work because they "seem

to be charged with significance” (ibid.:1) and every nuance is important and has a symbolic meaning. Spearing goes through different methods for the interpretation of dreams by the scholars whose articles are included in the book and in this way a reader gets a general idea of what to expect from the articles which follow.

The author of the first article in the book, "*On the borders of middle English dream visions* " is Peter Brown, professor and head of the Department of the School of English, University of Kent. He starts his article by reviewing important recent studies and current theories of dreaming in 14th century literature by Kruger, Russell and Lynch who mostly discuss the aesthetic or functional capabilities of the dream. Afterwards he states that his topic is “The significance of the boundary between waking and sleep” (Brown 1999:25). Brown examines Geoffrey Chaucer’s, Guillaume de Machaut’s, Langland’s and some other writers' works to give a picture of the usage of dreams in literature. He argues that a dreamer experiences solitude, wandering, a sense of death and that a literary dream can be used to identify an individual. “The dream, which by definition always has the dreamer as its center, allows for a confrontation with the self and its preoccupations such that a process of self-realization may be achieved” (ibid.:34). According to Brown, a dream is a way of entering into a different reality, which is somehow like ours, but the visual terms, meanings and language is different. The term of communication is a symbol and its understanding should be analytical. The author discusses some symbols used in the above mentioned writers' works. As a result of thorough research, he assumes that the dream, as a “betweenness” of conscious and subconscious, gives a writer the possibility to express and explore.

Steven Kruger’s article "*Medical and moral authority in the late medieval dream*" focuses on the dream as an illness in literature and by showing physical signs of a character's illnesses he proves that dreamer characters in books sometimes appear as physically or spiritually diseased in Medieval literature (Kruger 1999). Dreaming is very often linked to melancholy, sexuality and gender which points to its importance on a subconscious level, as well as in the conscious life.

One of the most interesting articles in the book belongs to David Aers – "*Interpreting dreams: Reflections on Freud, Milton and Chaucer*". The scholar chooses Freud’s *fragment of an analysis of a case of hysteria* (1905) as a source to address since this work already contains knowledge from *The interpretation of dreams* (Freud 1900) and claims that interpreting dreams can be easily learnt from examples. This makes the interpreter a discoverer, who can

disinter secrets of the subconscious. The key concepts in this process are: social relations, power, gender and allegory. David Aers considers that from concrete examples such as dreams of patients, one can make a reasonable analysis of literary dreams. He discusses this idea by using from Chaucer's and Milton's works (Aers 1999).

"Baring bottom: Shakespeare and the Chaucerian dream vision" by Kathryn L. Lynch, an academic specialist of Middle English literature, discusses the usage of dreams in Shakespeare's and Chaucer's works. According to her, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Shakespeare uses "contemporary dream theory and the lived experience of dreaming in order to make his points about the relationship between imagination and interpretation." (Lynch 1999:100). She underlines the importance of imagination in Medieval literary dreams and takes Chaucer's dream poems as an example. Lynch puts Shakespeare and Chaucer alongside with each other when it comes to usage and the role of dreams in their works. She notes that it is impossible to read their dreams correctly without considering the irony. However, she claims that Shakespeare deals with dreams by putting mystery in them while Chaucer uses complexity. The main idea of her article is still the importance of the imagination in creating a literary dream and in analyzing it.

Lynch's work is followed by Peter Holland's article *"The interpretation of dreams' in the Renaissance"*. He bases his research on Freud's theory of interpreting dream and quotes him: "We cannot understand the dream, but the dreamer, or the patient, can translate it immediately and without difficulty, given that the content of the dream is very close to his conscious thoughts." (Holland 1999:125). Holland discusses double dreams or dreams on dreams, different types of dreams and other interesting aspects of dreams in Renaissance philosophy and literature using examples of other writers that gives a good opportunity of understanding the nature of the dream in literature and philosophy.

The last article in the book is Kathleen McLuskie's *"The Candy-Colored Clown': Reading Early Modern Dreams"*. The author speaks about the various methods of reading dreams in early modern drama, such as: a fully dramatized dream vision, describing dreams, reflections on the state and nature of dreaming. She also discusses the difficulty of distinguishing between a dream and waking reality since sensual reality "can be equally present in dreams". (McLuskie 1999:150). McLuskie examines different literary sources and claims that: "The poetic connections and contrasts between dreaming and the waking reality suggest a range of

ways in which dreams could be seen and used as poetic and theatrical methods, structuring the emotional movement of the plays and constructing character.” (ibid.:152)

This particular book is very useful for the thesis because it offers different points of view and examples to give a better, clearer image of the usage, importance and interpretation of dreams in literature and helps to find an efficient base for new research.

For deeper insight into dreams in literature, part 1 in Laurence M. Porter’s book *The literary dream in French Romanticism* would be a good aid. Part 1 – “*The Dream in Psychology and Literature*” – is divided into two chapters: “*Dreams Real and Literary*” and “*The Romantic Dream*” (Porter 1979) . Here we can find a good comparison of dreams in real life and dreams in literature. Porter first goes through various beliefs and theories about why we dream and finally defines dream as: “a distinct, autonomous mental process... Dream materials are derived both from personal memory traces (Freud) and form a repository of the inherited collective wisdom of humanity (Jung).“ (Porter 1979:2). The scholar bases his theory and research on two major psychoanalysts, Freud and Jung, whose theories make his claims reliable and also gives us a critical overview of Freud’s and Jung’s opinions. Porter develops the idea that dreams in literature are not real and “they have only a fictional, linguistic existence” (ibid.:6) that is why when we interpret dreams in a literary work, we psychoanalyze the writer or the reader, “in other words, one is examining the connotations of the text as it reverberates outside the domain of its own discourse.” (ibid.) This point makes Porter's book especially interesting for my research as exploring writer's skills through the night dreams is one of the minor tasks of my thesis.

Porter’s work is also a good transition from aesthetic to psychoanalytical theories about dreams. The two main scholars here are Sigmund Freud with his *The interpretation of dreams* (Boston, 1987); *Dreams in Folklore* (New, York, 1958) and Carl Jung with his *Dream* (London and New York, 2002); *Psychology of the unconscious* (New York 1997); *Man and his symbols* (New York 1972). Their theories give us the possibility to discuss connection between the subconscious and the conscious and to find out how the dreams of Ibsen’s characters correspond to a psychoanalytical understanding of dreams and the subconscious. It will also help to explain why Ibsen’s characters make certain choices or changes in their lives after having dreams. I want to look at them not only as fictional creations, but as persons or types of persons like us, because Ibsen’s characters represent types of persons which are real.

1.3 Theory and Method

1.3.1 Theory

To produce valuable and well-grounded research, it is very important to have an efficient theory which will lead to a correct analysis and give the possibility of verifying the accuracy of the results. Therefore, choosing reliable theorists and scholars is essential. This thesis will use theories of internationally recognized scholars in order to have a solid basis on which to build efficient research.

The Psychoanalytic Theory and the Theory of Self-conscious Emotions such as guilt, shame, pride and embarrassment are the two main theoretical frameworks I will apply to my research.

When dealing with the Psychoanalytic Theory I will refer to Sigmund Freud and Carl Gustav Jung. The reason why I choose these two theorists is that, first of all, they focus on the interpretation and explanation of night dreams and the meanings of the symbols in them. Secondly, they are known as the most famous, competent and trustworthy scientists whose theories became a basis for the theories of other psychoanalysts.

Most useful for my research were Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*, New York 1996 and Carl Gustav Jung's *Man and his symbols*, London 1978.

The reason why I apply the Theory of Psychoanalysis to my thesis is that it focuses on the psychological and symbolic sides of dreams and tries to discover how dreams reveal a protagonist's subconscious and what kind of influence this may have on his/her conscious life and, correspondingly, on the development of the plot of the play. It also helps to define why Ibsen's characters make certain choices or changes in their lives after having dreams. This allows one to look at them not only as fictional creations, but as persons or types of persons like us, because Ibsen's characters represent real human types.

As for the Theory of Self-Conscious Emotions, I will mainly refer to Herant Katchadourian's book *Guilt, the Bite of Conscience*, Stanford, 2010. Katchadourian is an emeritus professor of psychiatry and human biology at Stanford University and former president of the Flora Family Foundation. He has received the Dinkelspiel and Lyman awards and has been selected seven times as Outstanding Professor and Class Day speaker. His book offers a multi-sided

study of guilt, shame, embarrassment and pride based on long and thorough research. He provides examples from real people's lives as well as from literary works which is a great aid while exploring self-conscious emotions in Henrik Ibsen's characters. Katchadourian's theory is a reliable base for building a comprehensive study of how the literary characters deal with moral dilemmas and how this affects their emotional state at a conscious or subconscious level, which can later find reflection in their night dreams.

As I have mentioned several times before, I intend to examine the night dreams of the characters of *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf* by understanding the conscious and subconscious levels of their minds. Therefore I want to give definition of these terms to avoid any misunderstanding later.

On the official web-site of the Oxford Dictionaries, *the subconscious* is defined as a "part of the mind of which one is not fully aware but which influences one's actions and feelings." (2014) (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/subconscious>) The dictionary also indicates that in Psychology *the unconscious* is the preferred term.

The dictionary defines *the unconscious* as "The part of the mind which is inaccessible to the conscious mind but which affects behaviour and emotions." (2014)
(<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/unconscious?q=unconscious>)

In the same dictionary *the conscious* is defined this way: "(Of the mind or a thought) directly perceptible to and under the control of the person concerned." (2014)
(<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/conscious?q=conscious>)

1.3.2 Method and data

Psychoanalytic Character Analysis is one of the methods I use to discuss the personalities of the characters in *The Vikings at Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*. This is the approach Sigmund Freud used to analyse literary characters like King Oedipus in his “*Interpretation of dreams*”.

In *The First Dictionary of Psychoanalysis: A Gift for Sigmund Freud's 80th Birthday* by Richard Sterba (Sterba 2013) the term *character analysis* is explained this way:

The typical behaviours and attitudes, characteristic methods of defence, specific aim-strivings, preferences, and aversions, in short, everything that we ascribe to character, are necessarily included in this psychoanalytic total revision... Thus every therapeutic psychoanalysis is essentially also a character analysis. (Sterba 2013:82)

This method covers the areas of human psychology and behaviour that stand in the centre of interest of my research; therefore it gives me the possibility to examine those areas following a certain scheme that has been approved by the experts.

Some questions could be raised concerning this approach. For example, can a literary character with a fictive personality become an object of psychoanalysis? Since this last implies that a patient must be directly examined and studied by the therapist, how can a fictional character be psychoanalyzed? Even though there is a point in such doubts and skepticism, we must remember that all valuable literary characters are based on real people. They share their human background with ordinary persons like us and hence, can be treated as real individuals. Since literature is so closely linked to life and since fictional characters actually represent real people, their feelings, emotions, decisions and dreams can be analyzed in the same way as those from our reality. Elizabeth Wright supports the same idea in her book - *Psychoanalytic Criticism - a Reappraisal* (Wright 1998):

From the viewpoint of the literary text, there is no harm in doing a fictive analysis on a fictive character. After all, if in a text we hear that someone has a mother, we do not stop with some dictionary definition of 'mother' if we want to learn about the depths and subtleties of the mother-child relation. (ibid.:42)

M. Kaplan and R. Kloss also underline the direct link between fictional characters and real people: "Fictional characters are representations of life and, as such, can only be understood if we assume they are real." (Kaplan and Kloss 1973:4).

If we consider how many times we have associated ourselves to some fictional characters or to certain nuances and events in their life stories, we can definitely claim that fictional characters are like us and their life is not different from ours. After all, the aim of writing fiction is to seek and understand what it is to be a human and deal with all the issues we encounter in life. When we read about Hjordis, Sigurd and Gunnar or about Eyolf, Rita, Alfred and Asta, we see them as real persons and judge them likewise. We expect them to behave the way it is expected in the society to which they refer and everything they experience, including their night dreams mean something to us. John Salinsky gives a clear and strong opinion on this matter:

In different ways, novelists, doctors and patients all seek to understand and express what it is to be human. Novelists use words in ways which show that they have understood parts of the experience of all of us. We find incidents in the stories of fictional characters which resonate exactly with the reality of our lives, and the expressive ability of the writer gives new dimensions to our own experience. (Salinsky and Heath 2002:V)

Psychoanalytic Character Analysis is a part of Psychoanalytic Criticism which was primarily established by Sigmund Freud and was called Psychological Literary Criticism until 1920. Freud believed that studying neuroses and human psychology was possible not only by observing an individual but also through the knowledge and experience that is accumulated in mythology, different sources of history, civilization and various types of art, including literature.

Freud proposes that literature and the other arts, like dreams and neurotic symptoms, consist of the imagined, or fantasied, fulfilment of wishes that are either denied by reality or prohibited by social standards of morality and property. (Abrams 1993:264).

Judging from this statement, Psychoanalytic Character Analysis as a part of Psychoanalytic Criticism proves to be the right method of approach to Henrik Ibsen's texts. With the help of

these two methods I am able to use Psychoanalysis while exploring the text and the characters and in this way to uncover the truth, not only from between the lines but also from the subconscious of the characters. This is the actual goal of the psychoanalytic critic.

The chief enterprise of the psychoanalytic critic, in a way that parallels the enterprise of the psychoanalyst as a therapist, is to reveal the true content, and also to explain the effect on the reader, of a literary work by translating its manifest elements into the unconscious determinants that contribute their suppressed meanings. (ibid.:265)

Psychoanalytic Criticism covers many aspects of literary analysis. Besides helping us uncover the true, suppressed meaning in a text, it also looks into the author's mental and emotional correlation with his work of literature and correspondingly, studying author's personality or psychobiography through his works. This aspect is one of the reasons for choosing this method for my research.

As for analyzing and interpreting the night dreams in particular, *oneirology* is the right method of research. It covers both *dream analysis* and *dream interpretation* from which the first permits one to explore how the social, cultural and traditional values are reflected in the dream and the second is looking in it for its repressed meaning.

Formally, the study of dreams is known as *oneirology* (Stevens, 1995) and is usually subdivided into dream analysis and dream interpretation. *Dream analysis* is concerned with the manner in which social psychological realities such as cultural values are reflected in dreams, whereas *dream interpretation* is concerned with the potential meanings of dreams (Haskell, 1986). (Baruss 2003:79).

Of course, none of the discussed methods and approaches can be useful without a detailed study of the original text. Since my major source is Ibsen's twoplays, *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*, my research is essentially based on analyzing the text itself to find information that will become material for the other methods I have discussed.

For a fundamental and correct understanding of the texts, I needed to look into the history of Norway and explore the Viking era as well as the political and social situation of Ibsen's contemporary Norway. Studying *The Vikings of Helgeland* in its historical context lead me to Saga literature; hence I collected information about the use of night dreams in Icelandic sagas.

Besides this I had to learn more about certain elements from the writer's biography that could help understand his point of view about night dreams on the one hand and about nationalism on the other.

2 Night Dreams - a brief presentation

A night dream is a phenomenon that we all experience during sleep. We may remember our dreams very well; sometimes we remember the very details and nuances of our dreams; sometimes only feelings or certain fragments stay in our memory, some other times we may recall nothing at all. Scientists and scholars note that "all people experience dreams on a regular basis: each time a person sleeps, he or she dreams. People vary in dream recollection..."(Horowitz 1995:33)

From ancient times, perhaps from the time the human mind existed people have paid attention to night dreams. People were asking themselves questions about this phenomenon for a long time. They were trying to find out where dreams come from, what they mean, what they tell us. Of course, different cultures formed different ideas about dreams.

What are dreams and where do they come from? What kinds of messages do they give us, and what areas of our lives are they concerned with? Every dreams theorist seeks to formulate some general principles to encompass the nature and purpose of dreams, and every system of dream interpretation arises within a particular culture with its own beliefs and values. (Covitz 1990:57)

We have very old records of dreams; good examples are those in the Bible and the Talmud. In the beginning night dreams were seen as prophecy, that is information about the future. Dreams were considered as messages from a god or from some other supernatural force and therefore people would usually give huge significance to them. Joel Covitz explains the connection between the dream and the future.

Whether for a group or an individual, dreams are a form of prophecy, which focuses on the future dimension. While it is evident that dreams utilize the past as a source of images, the actual purpose of most dreams is to facilitate a creative union between the past and present, while laying the foundation for future possibilities. (Covitz 1990:62)

Covitz takes the Talmud as his main material for exploring night dreams and their place in people's lives. He thinks that "the dream can be a vital force in the shaping of our

destiny."(Covitz 1990:68). However the most important fact about night dreams is that they "usually mirror either the conscious or the unconscious situation of the dreamer." (Covitz 1990:112)

The development of psychology and neurology cast a new light on night dreams. They became a subject of study by such neurologists and psychoanalysts as Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961). Questions regarding what dreams are capable of telling us and where and how they are formed remained active in their research. "Is the dream capable of teaching us something new about our inner psychic processes, and can its content correct opinions which we have held during the day?" (Freud 1913:103) In psychoanalysis night dreams are recognized as of tremendous importance in understanding the human mind and in studying the relationship between the subconscious and conscious. Freud claims that there is no useless information in a dream and that every element of a night dream can make sense if it is correctly interpreted and analyzed.

The dream is not senseless, not absurd, does not presuppose that a part of our store of ideas is dormant while another part begins to awaken. It is a psychic phenomenon of full value, and indeed the fulfillment of a wish; it takes its place in the concatenation of the waking psychic actions which are intelligible to us, and it has been built up by a highly complicated intellectual activity. (Freud 1913:103)

Taking into consideration that night dreams can express so much about a person's mental and emotional state, it comes as no surprise that artists found and still find dreams extremely interesting and use them in their works. Night dreams often become a means of introducing extra information, clues, intrigue or viewpoint in a work of art and literature. In addition to this, dreams are seen as a way to communicate with one's inner self, grasping and perceiving matters that are impossible to reach in waking life.

Artists seem to have known for centuries that the capacity to dream and to remember dreams is part of human creativity and problem solving, and thus of psychic health. Someone who cannot remember his own dreams misses a major possibility to be in dialogue with his unconscious and thus with his mind's attempts to find symbolic and creative solutions for unsolved problems of the present and past. (Fonagy 2012:xxiii).

We all agree that psychoanalysts and artists have at least one thing in common - they are interested in what it is to be a human being, how a human mind works and how we humans deal with moral, social, cultural and many other issues that we encounter in daily life. It is well known that psychoanalysts are very interested in literature and often scrupulously study literary characters. Sigmund Freud was one of them. And of course, many writers show a good understanding of human psychology. The fact that Henrik Ibsen was interested in psychology and studied symbols has been noted by scholars.

Det hävdas, att Ibsen blev mer psykologiskt intresserad, mer inåtvänd och slutligen mer egocentrisk på äldre dagar, och man finner att han efter hand gjorde ett allt flitigare bruk av symboler. (Brandell 1993:23).

Freud always showed interest in literature: Redan i *Drömtydning* finns en ofta citerad passus där han hyllar de stora diktarna för den djupa människokunskap som finns nedlagd i deras verk. (ibid.:84)

The aim of the following chapters is to show how well Henrik Ibsen knew the world of night dreams and how skilfully he used them in his works.

3 Importance of night dreams in *The Vikings of Helgeland*

Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland* is usually referred to as a nationalistic, patriotic and historical drama which is based on a saga. In this chapter I will try to show how and why the night dream has been used in the play and in which ways it is important. To understand these matters thoroughly, the following questions have first to be answered:

1. Why did Ibsen write a nationalistic historical play?
2. Why did he choose saga literature as his source?
3. What place do night dreams take in sagas?

3.1 *The Vikings of Helgeland*, history in the service of nationalism

Literature has always been a strong weapon in the fight for high ideals, truth, national identity and freedom. Over the centuries writers used to raise questions in their works which would make people think and discover, see and realize. Literature used to show the truth about the present, remind about the past and show a perspective for the future. In critical periods, when a nation was on the edge of losing its identity, writers would point out the most important and the best aspects of a nation's history, culture and traditions and would awaken in people the feeling of being a nation. Henrik Ibsen believed in this and tried to address people through his petition to Parliament in 1859:

Denne kampen I den høiere Friheds Tjeneste udkjæmpes her, som andetsteds m væsentlig av vore Kunstnere og Forfattere, disse Folkets aandelige Øine... Vore Digtere har gjennem sine Værker lært Folket at kjende og elske sin Fortid med alle dens Omskiftelser, de har under sande og forædlede Former stillet Billeder af Folkets Liv frem for vore Øine... Fokets Fællestanke, den eiendommelige

Grundbetragtning, der tilhører os og ingen Anden, fordi vi ligeoverfor Undenverdenen udgør et Helt, ikke blot ifølge politisk Overenskomst, men paa Grund af fælles Oprindelse, fælles Traditioner, fælles Sprog og fælles Skjæbne gennem gode og onde Tider. (2005:113)

Before I start reviewing what place national identity and nationalism took in Norwegian literature and how this is related to the play I am going to analyze in this chapter, I want to give brief information about what nationalism is.

Concepts such as a nation and nationalism did not always exist. People were not identifying themselves to any nation, they were united in religious groups or under some leader's headship. First signs of nation are noticed in the mid of 18th century in England. First writing about nationalism are found from 19th century. As Paul Lawrence writes in his book *Nationalism, History and Theory*, "Issues of identity were 'universal questions' for nineteenth-century European states, whether or not they underwent territorial upheaval..." (Lawrence 2005:20). Nationalism as every new term for a new concept was understood and defined in various ways by different historians. Some of them considered that ethnic roots and origins were the major elements in nation, others believed that cultural factors had more importance for uniting people with common nationalistic spirit. Some others gave more value to political, social and economic aspects. Lawrence underlines the fact that in different countries different factors were given priority in understanding and defining nation and nationalism.

It is not easy to find a definition of nation and nationalism that everyone would agree on. I want to use Øystein Sørensen's versions of the definition of these terms because it is more reliable when one wants to discuss nationalism in Norway. In his book *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson og Nasjonalisme*, Sørensen brings a definition of a nation which he considers is most common and objective: "En nasjon er en gruppe mennesker som har et felles språk, felles historie, felles levende tradisjoner, felles kultur, felles territorium, kanskje felles religion." (Sørensen 1997:11). However, he thinks that this definition is more ethnic and it means that a person has to be born as a part of the nation and it does not include the people who become citizens of a country and this way they should be considered as parts of the nation as well.

He suggests another definition of "nation" which is broader:

Nasjonen i denne forstand vil simpelthen være et kollektiv av mennesker som oppfatter seg selv som et nasjonalt fellesskap, og som har utviklet samlende institusjoner som kan være en ramme for og uttrykke dette fellesskapet. (Sørensen 1997:11).

Sørensen finds it very difficult to create a definition that would be precise, true, objective and broad enough to accept it as an universal explanation of what nation really is, but what he is certain about is that nation is not an unit that existed from the very beginning, it developed through history. He observes that "nation" has a central place in a concept of "Nationalism". Bjørnson picks out three components of Nationalism: political, cultural and emotional. The third component is base on the first two components and corresponds the broad understanding of "nation" that I already mentioned. This third component is the base of National Identity.

The need of creating National Identity in Norway appeared in the beginning of 19th century when in 1814 Norway became an independent country:

Likevel må man fastslå at Norge i 1814 var blit en egen stat uten noen strek felles nasjonal kultur. Det Norske nasjonsbyggingsprosjektet, eller prosjektene, gikk i stor grad ut på å utvikle en sterk nasjonal identitet ved å avdekke og utforme en slik kultur. (Sørensen 1997:25)

Henrik Ibsen lived at a time when Norway no more existed as a fully independent kingdom. After breaking the union with Denmark and declaring independence in 1814, Norway was once again forced to enter a union, this time with Sweden. On the 4th of November, 1814, the Parliament (Storting) elected Charles XIII of Sweden as king of Norway and in this way the union of Norway with Sweden was officially established. Under this arrangement, Norway kept its liberal constitution and its own independent institutions, except for the Foreign Service. However, the superiority of Sweden and Swedish was obviously underlined in the relationship between these two countries and the recently reborn spirit of freedom and feeling of being a united nation in an independent country needed to be taken care of, and given rich soil in which to grow. Bjørn Hemmer quotes Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson "that pride in their ancestors which every people fighting for its national identity must have" was the most important feature Norwegians needed and to create this national pride, it was necessary to find and show "the organic connection between the then and the now." (Hemmer 1994:15). He utilizes James McFarlane's term "Norwegian myth" to describe "the dream of a national

Renaissance". (ibid.:15). This time Norway more than ever was craving for someone who would light the fire of being a Norwegian in people's hearts and give fuel to burn without fading. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson considered that forming this National Culture and National Identity was a task of Norwegian elite which consisted of Norwegian artists, writers, scholars and other highly intellectual people. As James McFarlane notes in his book *"Ibsen & meaning : studies, essays & prefaces 1953-87"*:

By the mid-nineteenth century, constitutional independence in Norway was still a comparatively recent thing; the people craved reassurance that despite the political youthfulness of the nation they nevertheless belonged to an ancient kingdom; they wanted to be reminded of their long history and their great traditions; and the tendency was often to judge things, including works of literature, by the contribution they made to the process of national consolidation. (McFarlane 1989:143).

Henrik Ibsen was one of the most important figures in 19th century's Norway who brought up the subject of national identity and national pride. Even though independence was officially declared in 1814, which meant that Norway was politically a free country, changing the way people felt about themselves as elements that made up the nation was still to be done. What could really fulfill the liberation of Norway from Denmark was to build a strong nation which would be proud of its past, strong in the present and eager to fight for its future. James McFarlane underlines this factor in his book:

After pointing out that national pride was now everywhere recognized as an essential factor in the development of the country's cultural life, and insisting that political liberty alone did not make a people wholly free in spirit and in truth but that a nation must first be able to shape its ideas in a way native and natural to it as a people. (McFarlane 1989:143-144).

What could make the nation proud and strong more than the glorious past and the fame that its ancestors used to have? Of course, it was not surprising that Henrik Ibsen gazed into the past to find and show Norwegians of what they could be proud. The past was full of brave people, successful fights, great stories and myths which were likely to become the base on which the writer could build a new story for his people: " ...there was an inescapable obligation on a young and ambitious dramatist to look to Norway's past history for the stuff

of his plays.” (McFarlane 1989:144). *The Vikings of Helgeland* is a good example of this. It is known as Ibsen’s historical drama as the author uses historical material for his play but it is also tightly linked to National Romanticism. James McFarlane writes that in 1857-1864s concepts like: “nationalism, ‘aestheticism’, and – perhaps not, as yet, the most obtrusive but certainly the most fundamental and persistent – realism” (McFarlane 1989:143) were crucial in Ibsen’s life and writings.

According to George Bizstray, “Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) grew out of the belated Norwegian national Romanticism, a movement which gained strength only after the eighteen-thirties and was at least as significant politically as it was artistically.” (Bizstray 1994:324). This statement raises a question why and how Henrik Ibsen used Nationalism to create his historical plays, in this case *The Vikings of Helgeland* and how he used historical material to awaken national pride. To understand this subject better, looking through the history of National Romanticism and its purposes as a genre is more than useful.

Precisely when and where nationalism emerged is hard to define but Romantic Nationalism in literature takes its start in the beginning of 18th century Europe. It was inspired by the ideas of Rousseau (1712-1778) and Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744-1803) and was an important part of Hegel’s (1770-1831) philosophy. Romantic Nationalism was trying to see a particular nation in a particular period of history and to show that people were the active determiners of history; therefore they had to identify to a certain nation in order to realize who they were and what they should fight for. Clearly, Romantic Nationalism had very strong political purposes. France on the one hand and Germany on the other needed to arouse national consciousness in people in order to unify them into a nation not only on a political or territorial basis but also to give them a feeling of belonging to the same culture, the same roots and traditions. In this process literature was, as always, an important weapon. Drama as a genre was especially actual and timely. Dramatists developed a strong interest in history and traditions as well as in folklore. However, what made drama be a perfect form for shaping nationalistic ideas was its powerful effect on the reader. Herbert Lindenberger quotes Schiller in his book *Historical Drama, The relation of Literature and Reality*: “All narrative forms turn the present into the past; all *dramatic* forms turn the past into the present.” (Lindenberger 1975:70). Bringing the past into the present was what could make people feel that they were part of something great, lasting and memorable. Lindenberger explains why drama has such a strong effect on the reader: “Narrative works to create a distance, both temporal and physical, between us and the

personages it depicts, while drama seeks an immediacy of effect which succeeds in giving its personages a direct power over us.” (ibid.)

If we sum up these mentioned aspects of drama as a genre, it will be easy to see why it became the main interest for Nationalism. First of all, drama establishes direct contact with the reader by using the present tense and dialogue as a means of building the text which makes reader feel immediately involved in the story. Also, it tells about the past as if it were happening now and again the present tense plays a big role here. This way history seems to be not only the past but an active part of the present. And, finally, interest in history, folklore and traditions that Romantics brought into literature could serve to encourage pride and fascination for what could unify people into one nation. Marvin Carlson, in the article *"Nationalism and the romantic drama in Europe"*, underlines the link between Nationalism and Romanticism and claims that the aspects one can find in them are essential for creating national consciousness and unity:

The roots of modern Nationalism and Romanticism are closely intertwined. The Romantic dramatist found in national history, legend, and myth a fertile source of subject matter and in the struggles for national freedom and identification important sources of dramatic power, while the emerging nationalist consciousness found in the Romantic drama is highly useful means for encouraging national enthusiasm, pride, and solidarity. (Carlson 1994:139).

Marvin Carlson goes through the history of Romantic drama and nationalism in Europe, but we will only point out some statements to give a brief picture of the background Ibsen could have for his historical plays.

Carlson indicates the tendency of making drama historical and national in order to turn it into something true and valuable. This tendency developed through time in different countries, especially in Germany where creating a patriotic spirit in people was urgently required considering the political position of Germany in its contemporary situation. Hence, German philosophers and writers demanded that national elements were more than necessary components of Romantic drama. Carlson relates August Schlegel's words as an example of such demands: "The true potential of romantic drama will not be realized in Germany until it becomes deeply national and historical, depicting "what the Germans of olden times were and what they should become again." (Carlson 1994:143). Later, "During the 1830s this concept

of drama as a weapon for liberal thought, as well as for national consciousness spread out from Paris through much of Europe..." (ibid.:151). Wienbrag's point of view about Nationalism was even more engaged with politics but he strongly believed that: "Drama must arise, like all the noblest poetry "directly from the people, from the national spirit, from national customs." (Carlson 1994:151).

Naturally, the idea about Nationalism and romantic drama was not always true to its original version. Through time new needs, new tendencies and approaches arose and writers no longer looked at historical drama as a property of a certain nation but as something global that could refer to anyone, to any nation and would be important and actual worldwide and not just countrywide.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the concerns of historical drama became increasingly varied and complex. Strictly nationalist subjects gave way, as in the poems of Byron, to historical dramas carrying a message of freedom from oppression to all audiences, wherever their nationality. (Carlson 1994:152).

However, it did not take long to realize that everything global starts from the local and if a literary work has the ambition to become valuable worldwide, it must have a true and real basis; it has to come from a certain place, a certain people and only after that can other nations in other places can identify themselves to it. Coleridge's observation perfectly describes the stated idea: in order that a drama may be perfectly historical, it is necessary that it should be the history of the people to whom it is addressed." (Carlson 1994:152). Only a specific history of a specific nation can carry the element strong enough to be generalized from local to global.

3.2 Saga literature - a glorious past to create a splendid future?

Nationalism was no less important and actual in Norway than in Europe. The discussed political situation of the country was a perfect reason to make writers look deeply into their past and bring it forward into the present and into people's lives. Henrik Ibsen as well, was deeply involved with the idea of reinforcing national spirit and pride: "a people must be awakened to a consciousness of itself, of its history, its traditions, its language and its collective destiny in good times and ill: all those things which assert that 'in true sense of the word we comprise a nation'." (Hemmer 1994:12). By the time, young Ibsen started to work on dramas with Nationalism and the historical past as a central point, Romantic drama and Nationalism had already spread through different spheres of art and cultural life. Asbjørn Aarseth describes the literary activities in Norway in the 1840s as years of "cultivating collective memories and giving written form to folk tales and popular ballads and... working on the construction of a national mythology, in historical studies as well as in poetry." (Aarseth 1994:1). As Marvin Carlson points out, founding national theatres had become an important part of public and cultural activities. One of the examples can be the National theatre in Bergen, founded in 1849.

By the middle of the nineteenth century this relationship between Romantic idealism, political liberalism, and an emerging national consciousness had begun to bear fruit not only in the creation of national plays but in the founding of national theatres with a national repertoire. We see this manifested, for example, in the organization in 1849 of a National Theatre at Bergen, Norway, where the young Henrik Ibsen for the next six years devoted his developing dramatic skills to treating the materials of Norwegian legend and history... (Carlson 1994:152)

At Bergen National Theatre where he was assisting the theatre as a playwright from 1851, Henrik Ibsen tried his pen in writing historical plays such as: *St John's night* (1852), *Lady Inger* (1854), *The Feast at Solhaug* (1856), *Olaf Liljekrans* (1856) and started working on *The Vikings of Helgeland* which was finished and staged in Christiania National Theatre in 1858. C.H. Herford gives great importance to the time Ibsen spent at the Bergen National Theatre because in his opinion Bergen was preserved from the corroding influence of Denmark, here

honour and patriotic sentiment was still strongly treasured together with idioms of Norse dialect and Norse sagas. In Bergen Ibsen "found himself for the first time in contact with the heart of the national life." (Herford:351). James MacFarlane on the other hand considers his time after the National Theatre at Bergen as the time of crisis in Ibsen's life and *The Vikings at Helgeland* as a product of this crisis:

...*The Vikings at Helgeland*, *Love's comedy* and *The pretenders*... were the products of a time of real crisis in Ibsen's life: the seven agonizingly difficult years during which he lived in Christiania, between giving up his appointment in Bergen in the summer of 1857 and his ultimate departure from Norway into voluntary exile in the spring of 1864. (McFarlane 1989:142-143).

However, the idea of this play came to him long before Ibsen left Bergen or met the challenges of working at Christiania National Theatre. As Ibsen himself writes in the preface of the second edition (1883) of *The Feast at Solhaug*, the first raw draft of *The Vikings of Helgeland* was formed in his mind after he had done research about the Middle Ages in Norway for his play *Lady Inger*. His research lead him to the times of sagas but sagas about kings were not interesting for him as they were not good material for dramas. That is when he started studying Icelandic sagas and found them fascinating for their complicity about the relationships between men and women, woman and woman, man and man. He found these relationships, personalities and challenges presented in those sagas most appropriate for dramatic works:

Derimod fandt jeg rigt mål i de islandske ætte-sagaer, hvad jeg behøvede som menneskelig iklædning for de stemninger, forestillinger og tanker, der dengang opfyldte, eller i al fald mere eller mindre klart foresvævede meg. Disse gammelnordiske literære bidrag til vor sagatids personalhistorie havde jeg hidtil ikke kendt, knapt nok hørt dem nævne. Da faldt mig ved et tilfælde N. M. Pedersens, I ald fald for sprogtonens vedkommende, fortræffelige oversættelse i hande. Ud fra disse ætte-krøniker med deres vekslende forhold og optrin mellem mand og mand, mellem kvinde og kvinde, ove behovet mellem menneske og menneske, slog mig et personligt, fyldigt, levende livsindhold imøde; og ud af denne min leven sammen med alle disse afsluttede, enkelte, personlige kvinder og mand fremstod i min tanke den første rå, tågede udkast til "Hærmændene på Helgeland". (Ibsen 1883:XI).

Icelandic sagas could serve several different interests. First of all, taking history as a material for a play was exactly what society expected from a writer in Norway of that period. This way the play could be historical, promoting the awaking of national pride and patriotism which would make it actual and important for society. Secondly, intrigue and challenge in relationships that one can find in Icelandic sagas could become strong and a good basis for building a valuable and high standard drama. Ekaterina Berberska considers that passion, craving for love, and strong and remarkable personalities were the reasons why Ibsen found Icelandic sagas to be ideal material for his drama:

I sagaens verden – ikke minst i den heroiske fornaldarsaga – fant han sine idealer igjen, den seige selvhevdelsen, de kraftige og helstøpte personlighetene, den ukuelige viljen, de absolutte kravene til kjærligheten. Han fikk øye på de to kvinnene som ble til Hjørdis og Dagny. (Berberska 2008:21).

The term Icelandic saga may be confusing if we think of the fact that Ibsen was searching for material that would awaken pride of being Norwegian in his people. So why would he address himself to Icelandic sagas for this purpose? Even though those sagas had been written in Iceland, they are nevertheless important for other Scandinavian countries as they deal with mythology which these countries shared and stories about characters which were coming from similar cultures and backgrounds. As Merrill Kaplan explains, “The literature is so called because it was indeed written in Iceland in the thirteenth century; it relates the deeds and conflicts of the outstanding men of the North, and it is our best source of Old North mythology.” (Kaplan:19). Icelandic sagas are treasure not only for Icelanders but also for Norwegians, Swedes and Danes if we do not go further to their worldwide importance. Kaplan mentions that Ibsen considered saga literature to be a great part of Norwegian culture and believed that Norway had the right to claim them as its own, “in the nineteenth century they were very coveted cultural goods indeed. When Ibsen writes here of honor and of the scholarly defense of “our rights”, the affair of honor to which he refers is the matter of Norway’s claim on that saga literature.” (ibid.)

Ibsen’s claims were not devoid of foundation. Else Mundal has made an interesting research into the relationship between Norwegians and Icelanders in the times sagas were created. As she points out, these two nations were tightly linked to each other and Icelanders experienced a strong influence from the Norwegian life-style, culture and traditions. Sharing the same past and roots, the two nations always maintained much in common even though they developed

differently, though Icelanders often identified themselves with Norwegians and found more features in common with them rather than with the Swedes or Danes:

Som folk måtte islendingane av historiske grunnar kome til å definere seg i forhold til nordmennene. Medvitet om den felles forhistoria, måtte føre til at islendingane identifiserte seg med nordmennene, på den andre sida måtte islendingane bygge opp sitt eige sjølvbilete... Når alt kjem til alt viser det seg nok likevel at islendingane når situasjonen kravde det, stod last og brast med nordmennene og identifiserte seg med sine gamle landsmenn mot svenskar og danskar. (Mundal 1997:482-488).

Else Mundal explains the reasons why Icelanders had such a strong connection to Norwegians, why Norwegian culture, traditions and even their nature and life-style carried such importance for them. She reviews the historical time when people from Norway used to settle in Iceland. Obviously, they would bring their background with them and all of this would find a way to go on living in stories. Although living in a new country required adjusting to its habits and rules, the settlers would retain their national identity even through the process of turning from Norwegian into Icelandic.

Landnåmsmennene bar med seg førestellingar som var forma på bakgrunn av erfaringar i gamlelandet, og førestellingar som var knytte til livet i Noreg, norsk natur, fauna og flora levde vidare på Island sjølv om førestellingane ikkje lenger kunne relaterast til noko som var kjent og erfart i det nye landet. Overgangen frå å vere norsk til å vere islandsk må ha vore ein prosess der eit etterslep av førestellingar som var nedarva frå forfedrane i gamlelandet, levde parallelt med førestellingar som var forma av ein ny erfaringsbakgrunn og parallelt med at ein islandsk identitet – delvis forma i opposisjon til ein norsk identitet – voks fram. (Mundal 1997:479-480).

Considering such historical facts, it comes of no little surprise to learn that Henrik Ibsen based his claims on the Icelandic saga as a part of Norwegian culture. Hence, it seems natural that he would consider sagas as ideal material for creating a nationalistic and patriotic play for the Norwegian nation. Yet Ibsen was not the first or the only one who was exploring saga literature as material for drama or prose. Before him other Scandinavian writers had practiced using literature from Viking times in their work. In the introduction of *The Vikings of*

Helgeland it is stated that sagas were known to be an inspiration for many writers in Ibsen's time: "Enkelte ble inspirert til å skrive verk som må kalles sagapastisjer, og det klareste eksemplet på denne stilen er Carsten Hauchs *Saga om Thorvald Vidførte* fra 1849." (2006:184). Asbjørn Aarsen for his part names the Danish poet and dramatist Adam Oehlenschläger, as Ibsen's successful forefather in exploring "the Viking age, ending in the triumph of Christianity over the ruthless tenets and practices of the ancient Norse religion." (Aarseth:5).

Since Ibsen did not speak the Old Norse language, it is interesting to know how he could obtain access to saga texts. By the time he became interested in Icelandic sagas, there existed a few translations of different sagas in Danish by C.C. Rafn, N.F.S. Grundtvig, Jacob Aall, N.M. Petersen and so on. Ekaterine Berberska names Carl Christian Rafn's edition as Henrik Ibsen's source.

For å svare på spørsmålet om hvor godt Ibsen kjente de norrøne kildene han hentet inspirasjon fra, kan man trygt gå ut fra Ibsens belesthet på det norrøne området, tross for at han ikke behersket norrønt språk. I midten av 1800-tallet finnes det et rikt materiale av oversatt litteratur. Allerede i årene 1821-1826 kom Carl Christian Rafns *Nordiske Kæmpe-Historier* i tre bind, fra 1829 etterfulgt av samme oversetters *Nordiske Fortids-Sagaer*. Her fantes blant annet en oversettelse av *Volsunga saga*, som Ibsen etter alt å dømme kjente godt og brukte som bakgrunn til *Hærmændene på Helgeland*. (Berberska 2008:34).

Different scholars point out the same sagas and claim that Ibsen based his play *The Vikings of Helgeland* on them. These sagas are: *Volsunga Saga*, *Njals Saga*, *Egil Skallagrimssons Saga*. Merrill Kaplan writes "The play is larded with characters, situations, details, and whole lines of dialogue from *The Saga of Volsungs*, *Njals Saga*, and *Egils Saga* that are immediately recognizable to anyone who has read them..." in his "*Hedda and Hjørdis: Saga and scandal in Hedda Gabler and The Vikings of Helgeland*", (Kaplan 2004:25). In the introduction of *The Vikings of Helgeland* (2006) there are mentioned a number of other sagas which Henrik Ibsen had studied and he probably used this knowledge in his creative process. *Vantsdøla saga*, *Gunnlaugs Saga*, *Gilsels Saga*, *Eirik Raudes Saga*, *Hervarar Saga* and *Orvar-Odds Saga* are among them.

The three main sagas are still the *Saga of Volsungs*, *Njals Saga* and *Egils Saga*. Characters of these sagas can be recognized in Ibsens play by names as well as by personal characteristics. Ekaterine Berberska discusses this fact in her master thesis:

Når man begynner å lese skuespillet, blir man snart oppmerksom på de opptredendes navn: Ørnulf fra Fjordene, Sigurd hin Sterke, Gunnar Herse, Dagny, Hjørdis, Egil – alle er av den type karakteristiske navn som var brukt av de norrøne skaldar og sagaskrivere. (Berberska 2008:37).

She draws parallels between the personages from Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland* and characters from the sagas on which he based his play. She shows the prototypes for the main figures of the play and even claims that Ibsen not only used one prototype for each of his characters but took characteristics from different ones to create any personality he needed:

Det er kvinneskikkelsene i dramaet som viser det mest påfallende slektskap med kvinnene i Volsunga saga, skriver Vigdis Ystad. Hjørdis er en klar parallell til Brynhild, til Gudrun Usvivsdatter i Laxdøla saga og til Hallgerd i Njåls saga. Dagny er det vanskeligere å finne konkrete modeller for, men hun spiller en lignende rolle som Gudrun i Volsunga saga og Hrevna i Laxdøla saga. (Berberska 2008:39).

James Fishes shortly defines Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland* as a "four-act romantic drama in blank verse drawn from the Icelandic family sagas and set on a Norwegian island in the tenth-century, which focuses on the story of the tragic obsession of Hjordis, wife of Gunnar the strong, with her brother-in-law Sigurd." (Fisher:64). Even though Ibsen used a historical age as the base for his drama, he did not limit himself to just one saga. On the contrary,

He made a very formalized use of his sources, in no way attempting to make the play "representational" of any one saga; instead, he adopted a markedly eclectic and abstractive approach, amalgamating features selected from a number of different sagas... *Volsunga Saga*, *Egils Saga*, *Njals Saga*, and *Laxdæla Saga*. (McFarlane 1989:149).

James McFarlane considers the fact that Ibsen used not only one but several sagas to create his original play as an advantage of his creativity.

For Ibsen as a writer, a historical period was not interesting only in the sense of time but for the concepts that defined that particular part of history. His aim was not to give a realistic picture of historically true facts but to show the spirit of that historical period and what was worth remembering from it. McFarlane quotes Ibsen to illustrate his opinion about the real qualities of a good historical drama: "We have no real right to demand of true historical tragedy that it give the historical facts, but only the historical possibilities; not the evident persons and characters of history, but rather the spirit and temper of the age". (McFarlane 1989:149)

Saga literature is important not only for the stories it tells but also for its style, structure and form. Different scholars have different opinions about the main elements of saga structure. Margaret Clunies Ross reviews these opinions in her book *The Cambridge Introduction to Old Norse, Icelandic Saga*. She introduces Jesse Byock's theory who in his *Feud in the Icelandic Saga* (1982) proposes that:

Saga literature imitates life, that is, social life in Iceland in Saga age, not by using a fixed narrative syntagm, but rather by combining the three active elements that he argued were present in all Icelandic feuds, but in a variable order as happened in life. These three elements were conflict, advocacy and resolution, and the narratives that expressed these elements Byock termed "feudems", the minimal elements of feud stories. (Ross 2010:131).

Besides these three elements, there are some themes that can be found in most of the sagas, especially in the family sagas. Margaret Clunies Ross points out the following themes which she considers are the main ones for a great number of sagas: "the oppositional pairs male and female; active and passive; dominance and subordination; love and hate; honesty and deception; home (Iceland) and away (Norway); pagan and Christian." (Ross 2010:130). One can easily find these three themes in Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland*. There are pairs of male and female like Gunnar and Hjördis and Sigurd and Dagny. Hjördis is clearly an active person, restless and ambitious while Dagny is a more peaceful and obedient character. Hjördis is a dominating character while others, even male ones are in a way manipulated by her. This domination and subordination is based on love and hate which takes its start in the past and is linked with the deception the characters experience.

3.3 Dreams in saga literature

Henrik Ibsen's *The Vikings of Helgeland* can be studied in relationship with saga literature in many different ways, but what is most interesting for this research is the use of the dream in this play. The night-dream is one of the aspects that links this play to saga literature, as it is an important and meaningful element of Old Norse literature. Many scholars, who have studied Old Norwegian and Icelandic literature, prove that night dreams appear in most sagas regardless if it is a king saga or a family saga.

Georgia Dunham Kelchner notices the important role of dreams in Old Norse literature, in poetry as well as in prose. She claims that in old Iceland dreams were believed to come true. Old Norse literature, as a kind of mirror of people's beliefs and traditions, attracted this relation of people towards dreams and gave very interesting examples of them. She even gives the approximate number of dreams found in Old Norse literature:

Dreams are prominent feature throughout this literature; indeed, it has been estimated that no less than five hundred and thirty dream references are to be found... they form an integral part of the poetry and prose in which they appear, and their function within the more or less perfectly unified framework which these represent is often well defined and highly significant. (Kelchner 1935:3)

These dreams play a big role in the development of events in sagas and often decide how the story will continue or end. One can say that the night dream also takes its significant place in the structure of the saga. Margaret Häkel's PHD research, *Die Darstellung und Funktion des Traumes in der Isländischer familiensaga* supports this idea. Häkel observes that a dream in a saga cannot be analyzed alone but in relation as to what it means for the story of the saga, as a dream usually is a part of the saga's literary structure. (Häkel 1934:15) Hence, dreams have different tasks in sagas. They can give a whole overview over events in a saga or predict a future event that has already been established by fate. (ibid.:16) Therefore interpretation of the dreams is extremely important for the character. As Elin Østby says in her master's thesis *Drømmer og drømmetydning i norrøn sagalitteratur* one can find at least, 3-4 dreams in each saga and the characters usually try to interpret them. She defines a dream, more precisely, a night dream as notions and experiences that occur in a person when asleep and therefore

when this person has no control over his own consciousness: "...drømmen er forestillinger og opplevelser under søvn, kjennetegnet ved at fulle bevissthetskontroll er opphevet." .

In Old Norse dreams were considered as predictions of the future, of what will happen or as a kind of message from the other world, the world of spirits and the dead. They could as well contain warnings and hints about what could be coming to the dreamer or to other persons. Elin Østby refers to Peter Hallberg to underline that dreams have a function of predicting the future in sagas and that it is not right to look at dreams in saga literature from psychoanalytic point of view and to discuss a person's mental or subconscious state considering symbols in his dream as psychoanalysts do. Dreams in saga literature have to do with folklore and supernatural forces which are a case going beyond the limits of psychoanalyses:

Mange av drømmene i den norrøne sagalitteraturen handler om hvordan det vil gå i fremtidig strid. (Østby 2002:76)

Funksjonen til drømmene i isendingesagaene er å antyde hva som vil hende i fremtiden. Peter Hallberg hevder at en ikke kan se sagadrømmene i lys av psykoanalytisk drømmetolkning; de bør ikke oppfattes som et uttrykk for drømmerens sjeletilstand, men som inngitt mennesket fra overnaturlige makter. (ibid.:18)

Østby uses *Kulturhistorisk leksikon for nordisk middelalder* to claim that in the early Middle Ages the dream was perceived as reality as an impact sent from supernatural forces to tell a person something important about the future. She brings in Reichborn-Kjennerud's observation to show how Christianity changed people's perception of dreams and their vision of this phenomenon. After Christianity became a new religion, dreams retained their importance but they were no longer linked to supernatural forces. The new religion claimed that dreams were sent to people either from God or the Devil or from themselves. As Østby notes, such a point of view can be observed in king sagas: "I kristen middelalder begynner holdningen til drømmer å endre seg. drømmene blir nå oppfattet som meddelelser fra Gud eller fra Djevelen." (Østby 2002:85).

Later dreams were observed in a scientific way and lost their importance as messages from supernatural or religious sources. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and Gustav Jung (1875-1961) developed two major theories about dreams. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory claimed

that dreams come from a person himself and they can be understood as a kind of language spoken by a person's subconscious. To understand this language one has to look deep into a person's past and present. He believes that usually, childhood and sexuality have the most important role in the interpretation of dreams.

However, discussing the psychoanalytical point of view about night dreams would be too early as first of all, it is more logical to underline the parallels and links that are obvious and direct between Ibsen's play and saga literature.

Scholars name several sagas as Ibsen's sources and in all of those sagas night dreams appear to play a significant role in the characters' lives and in the future development of events. For example, in *Laksdøla Saga* one of the main characters, Gudrun Osvivsdotter, knows from her dreams that four of her husbands are going to disappear from her life or die, which clearly is a prognosis of the future: "I *Laksdøla saga* finnes det flere drømmer som forustier kommende hendelser." (Østby 2002:45).

In *Volsunga Saga* dreams are also used to predict the future or to be more precise, the death of several important characters. Here night dreams give hints to the reader about what is going to happen. Sometimes the same events appear in different dreams which makes it easier to guess that they are going to come true.

Drømmene har en sentral plass i *Volsunga saga*. De er med på å drive handlingen fremover, og de fu gerer som varsler om kommende vegivenheter. Enkelte hendelser gå igjen i flere av drømmene, og dette er med for å forstørke leserens anelse om at de kommer til å gå i oppfyllelse. Dette gjelder bl.a. både drapet på Gudrunns brødre, Høgne og Gunnar, og drapet på kong atle. (Østby 2002:26).

Night dreams play a central role in *Islendinga Saga* too. Østby distinguishes this saga as the richest in dreams: "Ingen andre sagaer i nørren litteratur inneholder så mange drømmer." (Østby 2002:72). However, *Islendinga Saga* is not different from other sagas when it comes to the way dreams are used in it. Here, as usual, dreams give a picture of future happenings or function as a warning to the characters. The dreams are never out of context and they are always related to the content of the saga: "Drømmene er her benyttet på en tradisjonell måte, en drøm gir enten et overblikk over hele sagaens handling eller den fungerer som et dramatisk

varsel like før en voldelig handling. De fleste av drømmene er enten direkte eller indirekte knyttet til hovedtemaet i sagaen; oppkomsten og fallet til sturlungeslekten." (ibid.)

Night dreams usually carry some symbols which give special meaning to the dream and help the characters of sagas to interpret them. For example, in *Gunnlaug Ormstunge's Saga* the dream is given in the very beginning and it gives an indirect picture of what is going to happen through symbols and signs presented in it. Here too, as in most of the sagas, dreams appear to be the main keys to the plot of the story as all the events are built on what the dreams predict will happen: "De driver handlingen i sagaen fremover. I realiteten er hele sagafortellingen bygd på Torsteins drøm, og hele handlingen er en oppfyllelse av denne drømmen." (Østby 2002:36).

Guðrún Nordal points out the special role of night dreams in the *Sturlunga Saga*: "They are vehicles of moral assessment of events and key persons on a scene, and provide the author with an opportunity, in the guise of dream person, to present the audience with an ethical evaluation of the unfolding action." (Nordal 2006:305). According to her statement, dreams make historical narrative more dramatic and moving for the reader. Because of the symbols they carry, the story gains power and value also artistically. "The dream sections add symbolic and even apocalyptic imagery into the historical narrative." (ibid.: 308)

It is obvious that the night dream is an element which is not just indivisible, but many times central and essential in sagas. Belief in supernatural forces, in gods, in destiny, which is a natural part of Norse culture from the Viking era is attracted to the literature from those times and makes it more valuable and important for the descendants of the old man of the North. Hence, it is natural that Henrik Ibsen, when using saga literature as his main source for creating a nationalistic play, is presenting a night-dream in his work. However, what is interesting and worth discussing is in which way does the dream of Gunnar have an effect on the events or actions of the characters and whether or not Ibsen submissively follows the tradition of using dreams in sagas.

3.4 Night dreams in *The Vikings of Helgeland*

Before discussing Gunnar's dream and its place in *The Vikings of Helgeland*, it is important to mention other sources Ibsen used while working on his play. Ibsen as a talented and serious literary writer would not find basing a historical drama on sagas enough of a challenge. For him style was as important as content, therefore the saga was not enough to create a fully valuable literary work. Even though choosing saga material would have been the best in the sense of putting a nationalistic spirit in his work, it was difficult to combine the cold, self-contained nature of saga with the strongly emotional nature of drama. Ibsen considered that in order to create a dramatic work based on epic material, it was necessary to bring in a lyric element, because: “drama... is a higher combination of lyric and epic.” (McFarlane 1989:145). However he did not want to touch roughly the “abstract plastic form” (ibid.) which writers had chosen for sagas. McFarlane notes that Ibsen even considered ballads as his possible material. Although the lyric element was very important for Ibsen, he still wrote *The Vikings of Helgeland* in prose. He found a way to balance the challenges and characteristics of both styles, that of saga and that of drama and by using lyrical elements conjoint in prose, Ibsen created a strong and valuable work of literature. “Whereas earlier he had supposed the problem to be that of how to adapt and trim the saga material to fit the nature of drama ... he finished by having to modify and enlarge his conception of the nature of drama to allow it to meet the challenge of this intractable material.” (ibid.:146)

It was not only for style Ibsen had special standards and requirements. As scholars note, *The Vikings of Helgeland* is not only a nationalistic and romantic drama. Even though the main point of interest in that period was awaking patriotism in people, Ibsen was occupied dealing with different questions and concepts. For him aestheticism and realism were no less important and interesting than nationalism. James MacFarlane considers that realism was the most fundamental concept for Ibsen even while working on historical themes.

Intrinsic or extrinsic evaluation alike, however, invariably confronts the critic before long with three rather improbably associated concepts, the roles of which in Ibsen's thought and work and life in these years were crucial. Those concepts were nationalism, ‘aestheticism’, and – perhaps not, as yet, the most obtrusive but certainly the most fundamental and persistent – realism. (McFarlane 1989:143).

Once realism becomes a considerable aspect in *The Vikings of Helgeland*, usage of a night dream in this play should be looked at more broadly than one would look at the night dreams in sagas.

In *The Vikings at Helgeland* night dream occurs not in the very beginning but at the point when important secrets are revealed and relationships between characters start to change dramatically. The dream is seen by one of the main characters, Gunnar, and is the only dream that we have in the drama.

3.4.1 Interpretation of Gunnar's dream

Gunnar's night dream is introduced in the third act of the play *The Vikings of Helgeland*. Gunnar tells his dream to his wife, Hjørdis when he finds her sitting alone in the room, making a bow-string: "Hjørdis sidder paa Bænken lige for det mindre Høisæde beskæftiget med at flætte en Buesnor; paa Bordet ligger en Bue og nogle Pile." (2006:425). As they start talking about the bow-string which Hjørdis has made from her own hair and arrows specially sharpened, Hjørdis implies that she wants Sigurd dead and Gunnar remembers his dream from the other night which he describes like this:

Paa en Drøm, jeg nylig havde. Det kom mig for, at jeg havde øvet det Værk, du nu kræver; Sigurd lå slagen paa Marken; du stod hos og var saare bleg. Da sagde jeg: «Er du nu glad, da det er gjort, som du vilde?» Men du lo og svared: «Gladere skulde jeg være, ifald du, Gunnar, lå der i Sigurds Sted». (2006:428).

This night dream includes several elements that make it to be a prediction on the one hand and cause of future happenings on the other hand. First of all, the fact that Hjørdis wants Gunnar to kill Sigurd, is not clearly and directly declared in the play before Gunnar has the night-dream. It only comes after she has heard the dream that she asks her husband to kill Sigurd. After the truth is revealed about the great deed and Sigurd become the first brave man in the country, Hjørdis's pride withers away and she says that either she or Sigurd must die. However, it is strongly underlined in Ibsen's text that she says this to herself, which means that none else could know about her secret thought. The following quote concludes the second act of *The Vikings Helgeland*:

Hjørdis (*for sig selv*). Nu har jeg kun een Gjerning igen; – kun een Daad at pønse paa: Sigurd eller jeg maa dø! (2006:423).

In the beginning of the third act we learn that Gunnar knows Hjørdis wants Sigurd dead. He also guesses to whom the bow is meant to be aimed; the bow Hjørdis has been making. Even before Hjørdis says anything about killing Sigurd, Gunnar tells her that he knows her intention. Hjørdis does not immediately agree that he is right but gives a rather ambiguous answer. Although her answer is not yes, neither is it no:

Gunnar. Jeg skønner dig nok; du vil have Sigurd fæddet.

Hjørdis. Hm, kan hælde. (2006:427).

As their conversation progresses, Hjørdis states that Sigurd is a danger to both of them and that he is going to bring misfortune: “Et veed jeg dog vist: at Sigurd vil volde usalige Kaar for os Begge.” (2006:428) This is followed by Gunnar telling his dream and the reader now knows that it was not only his suspicion that Hjørdis wanted Sigurd’s death but he had already seen it in his dream.

Since *The Vikings of Helgeland* carries many features of saga literature, the importance of the night dream content for the development of the play is considerable. In her PHD research *Die Darstellung und Funktion des Traumes in der Isländischen Familiensaga* Margarete Häckel says that a dream in a saga cannot be analyzed alone but in relation to what it means to the story of the saga, as a dream usually is a part of a saga’s literary structure. (Häckel 1934:15). Dreams have different tasks in sagas. They can give a whole overview of events in a saga or predict future event that have already been established by fate. (ibid.: 16)

These statements apply well to the dream presented in Ibsen’s play. The dream tells Gunnar that Hjørdis wants Sigurd’s death even before she declares it and it also says that it is Gunnar who will be given the task of killing Sigurd even though nothing indicates that Hjørdis intends to give him this task. On the contrary, everything before the dream points out that she is going to kill Sigurd. She does not talk about her thought to anyone and prepares the weapon to kill him in secret, at night when she thinks Gunnar is sleeping.

The dream in the play becomes the cause of a future event which is Hjørdis asking Gunnar to kill Sigurd. The development of the scene of Gunnar’s and Hjørdi’s conversation gives the

impression that the dream might have given Hjørdis an idea of asking her husband to kill the man who put them to shame, especially on her as she hears from Gunnar that Sigurd was meant to become her husband in the first place and that only someone like him could have made her life bright and proud: “Sigurd skulde blevet din Husbond... Som Sigurd skulde jeg været, da kunde jeg gjort dig Livet lysteligt at bære.” (2006:430) Gunnar’s dream and his words seem to inspire Hjørdis in a different way regarding Sigurd’s death, as she now asks Gunnar to kill Sigurd: “Gunnar, tag Sigurds liv!” (ibid.)

As one can see from the sequence of events, Gunnar’s night dream is a reason for one of Hjørdis’s actions or decisions. The night dream determines her future actions and even makes her change her plan; if before Hjørdis’s intension was to kill Sigurd herself, which is clear if we consider that in the beginning she was keeping her thoughts in secret and was preparing by stealth bow and arrows to kill Sigurd, after hearing her husband’s dream, she changes the plan and gives the task of killing Sigurd to Gunnar. This way the night dream becomes more than a prediction of the future. It has the power of inspiring the characters, to give them ideas and to make changes in their plans, in this case, the character being Hjørdis. However, her actions have an impact on the future of other characters.

The fact that Hjørdis asks Gunnar to kill Sigurd could also be understood as a prediction come true, since in the dream Gunnar did what Hjørdis wanted which was that Sigurd be killed: “...jeg havde øvet det værk, du nu kræver; Sigurd lå slagen på marken...” (2006:428). It means that in the dream Hjørdis had already established her wish to Gunnar and perhaps, had asked him to kill Sigurd as it could less likely be Gunnar’s own idea or secret intention to take his best friend’s life, he in fact refuses to kill Sigurd even after Hjørdis asks him to do so, and even though he is tempted by her promises to be the loving and passionate wife she has never before been to him.

If the case discussed can be interpreted or understood in two ways, there are other elements of Gunnar’s night dream that are pure predictions. One of them is Sigurd’s death and another one is Hjørdis’s feelings for Sigurd.

Gunnar’s night dream contains information about Sigurd’s death. Although some elements do not coincide with the reality of the play, the dream is still a strong picture of the tragic future which the reader is to witness in the end. As is predicted in the dream, Sigurd dies, he is killed but not by Gunnar. Hjørdis is the one who takes his life with the bow she had made: “kaster

buen til kinden og skyder.” (2006:470) Sigurd’s death is followed by Hjørdis’s suicide in the play which is not predicted in Gunnar’s night dream. However, there is a nuance in it which is more important and interesting.

As noted before, in Gunnar’s dream Hjørdis wishes that Gunnar was dead instead of Sigurd while her behaviour and words in reality prove the opposite until act three introduces dialogue between herself and Sigurd. Before this dialogue the reader knows that Hjørdis considers Sigurd must die; she says that she hates him and tries to hurt him and Dagny. Hence there is no direct sign of her being in love with him or being attracted to him. Hjørdis does not give a reason to her husband to think that she has feeling for rather than hatred towards his friend. And still Gunnar’s dream underlines the fact that Hjørdis would rather see him dead and Sigurd alive.

Later in the third act we can see how Gunnar’s dream is a prediction of Hjørdis’s feelings for Sigurd. When Sigurd comes to Gunnar’s house looking for Hjørdis, they start a very sincere conversation about the past. She tells Sigurd about her secret day dream, her clandestine wish which she used to depict in her mind:

Hm, veed du hvad mig stundom tykkes? Tidt finder jeg min Fryd ved at male mig lystelige Billeder I Sindet; jeg sidder da og lukker Øinene og tænker: Nu kommer Sigurd hin Stærke til landet; - han vil brænde os inde, mig og min Husbond. Alle Gunnars mænd ere faldne; kun han og jeg er igjen; - da tænder Taget udenfra; - ”Et Bueskud”, siger Gunnar ”et eneste kan frelse os”; - da brister Snoren – ”Hjørdis, skjær en Flætning af dit Haar og gjør en Buesnor deraf, - det gælder Livet!” – Men jeg leer – ”Lad brænde, lad brænde – Livet er mig ikke en Haandfuld Haar værd!” (2006:441).

This confession is the first declaration of Hjørdis’s love for Sigurd. In her dreams Sigurd is the strong, brave man who deserves love and admiration from women. He is the one who can save her from a life full of pain and regret. He is the one who is stronger than her husband and who can actually use his strength to kill him. From this fragment we can see that Gunnar’s night dream predicted or opened one more truth the fact that Hjørdis would indeed see Gunnar dead rather than Sigurd. This way Gunnar’s dream is not only a prediction but also an uncovering of already existing secrets, even ones which are not yet acknowledged by the characters, in this case, by Hjørdis. In the dream nothing is directly said about Hjørdis’s love

for Sigurd, but it can easily be assumed and Gunnar realizes it too. This can be one of the reasons why he tells his wife that Sigurd should have been her husband. Later, in the third act we have a confirmation of this love.

Sigurd tells Hjørdis how Gunnar and he chose wives. It was her, Hjørdis who was the dream of many men as she was wise and proud and the most attractive of all. Both Sigurd and Gunnar were amazed by her:

Sigurd: ...den ene, hans Fosterdatter, var dog den ypperligste; thi hun var fostandig og stærk af sind, og Hærmændene talte om hende mellem sig, og Ingen af dem havde seet fargrere Kvinde, saa tyktes dem Begge. (2006:443).

Sigurd loved Hjørdis and thought of her day and night, but as he says, he as well as others could easily see that Hjørdis disliked him. She was not showing any sympathy towards Gunnar either, but Sigurd could feel hostility and rejection from her. When Hjørdis declared that she would only marry the man who would accomplish a heroic deed for her, Sigurd felt, he was ready to become this man but when “Gunnar tog ham i Enrum, nævnte om sin Elskov; - Sigurd taug med sin, og gikk saa til.” (2006:443) He decided to give way to his friend and take Dagny as his wife. And he never told anyone about his love for Hjørdis. Neither did he ever tell Dagny that he never really loved her, but only learned to prize her. It was only Hjørdis he always loved: “Jeg lærte at skatte hende; men der er kun een Kvinde, som Sigurd har elsket, og det er den Kvinde, som var ham gram fra den første Dag de mødtes.” (ibid.:444)

From Sigurd's words everything becomes clear about the past and about his life. Secrets even about his deepest feelings are uncovered and the truth which seemed to be obvious a few hours before are now destroyed: “Det var altså ikke helt slik som Dagny hadde fått høre kvelden før – at det bare var Gunnar som var betatt. Men Sigurd hadde for sin egen del fornemmet uvilje og avvisning fra Hjørdis – hva hun mente om Gunnar, var mer uklart. Det var noe av bakgrunnen for at han hadde veket plassen for vennen.” (Bø and Ibsen 2000:163).

As Sigurd's true feelings and true version of the past events are revealed, Hjørdis's relation to the past and to the given reality of the present changes in an extreme way. Now she is no more just the wife of a coward or a woman who was lied to and put to shame but a woman who is a true love of the bravest man of the country and who can still find true happiness in the future. Suddenly the proud and stubborn Hjørdis shows her sensibility and emotions. She

speaks “stille, kjæmpende mellem Graad og Latter.” (2006:445). Now we see a woman with her weaknesses and tenderness. It is interesting how Ibsen underlines that distance between hostility and love is very small and it is very easy to cross the border from one feeling to another. Or how sometimes what we thought was hatred may appear to be love. When Hjørdis hears Sigurd’s story, she realizes that it was him she had loved for all of these years and the detestation she carried in her heart, was actually love. “Nå først skjønner Hjørdis at hun egentlig hadde elsket Sigurd – trass i den kalde minen hun hadde satt opp: «hin stolte kvinde, som du nævnte, - hun har elsket dig igjen!... nå skjønner hun plutselig likevel at det i virkeligheten var kjærlighet.” (Bø and Ibsen 2000:163-164).

Hjørdis tells Sigurd that she loves him and has always loved him: “...hin stolte kvinde, som du har nævnte, - hun har elsket dig igen!... Ja, Sigurd, jeg har elsket dig, det skønner jeg nu...” (2006:445). She now knows the truth not only about what happened before or how people she knows behaved but, what is most important; she learns the truth about herself, about her feelings and personality. She now can be different from the Hjørdis she was before; a strong, obstinate woman opens up her feminine and sensitive side.

In Act four Ibsen gives a picture that proves that not only in her dreams would Hjørdis let Gunnar die without showing any mercy, but in reality too she would do nothing to save him or their only child. When Sigurd tells her that Gunnar’s house is burning and her husband and son are in great danger, Hjørdis answers: “Lad brænde, lad brænde! Skysalen deroppe er bedre end Gunnars bjælkestue!... Lad fældes, – så fældes min skændsel med det samme!” (2006:470). This fragment shows once again that Gunnar’s night dream is a prediction of future events and is tightly linked not only to the happenings but also to the secrets of Hjørdis’s mind.

3.4.2 Gunnar's dream - a prediction or reflection of the events and subconscious thoughts and wishes?

As the analysis of Gunnar's dream shows, it can be easily pronounced as a dream which predicts future. I will shortly sum up the reasons why to think so:

1. From the dream Gunnar knows that Hjördis is in love with Sigurd that is revealed later in the play without any real information about it from before.
2. In the dream Hjördis asks Gunnar to kill Sigurd even though she had not even mentioned to anyone she wanted him dead before. After Hjördis really asks her husband to kill Sigurd.
3. Sigurd is killed in the dream and it happens in the end of the play in real.

However, if one looks deeper in the text, there will be found quite interesting nuances which object the idea of night dream working just as a future-telling phenomenon.

First of all, events that develop in the plot before the night dream occurs, already give quite obvious hints of what may happen in the future. And this is not only for the reader but for the characters too. Sometimes the reader can see and guess a lot about characters personalities, feelings, possible actions and decisions while characters themselves have no possibility of doing the same. *The Vikings at Helgeland* is not a perfect example of such literary work. Gunnar's night dream predicts or uncovers Hjördis's feeling for Sigurd. Is it totally correct? Starting from the time when the two Vikings got married, Gunnar knew, it was Sigurd who deserved Hjördis's love, he was the brave, fearless, strongest man she described in the image of her desired husband. Gunnar knew this all the time and probably, feared of this knowledge. Once the truth about the author of the great deed was revealed, it was more than expectable that his fear would become even stronger and his reputation as well as masculinity would no longer be secure in relationship with his wife. The dream where Gunnar kills Sigurd after Hjördis's will and where his wife indirectly but powerfully declares her love for Sigurd, occurs exactly after the real author of the deed is known. I cannot help wondering whether Gunnar's dreams content has to do a great deal with recently happened changes rather than be a message from supernatural forces about the destiny of the characters as it would be in a saga. To me this dream more looks like a consequence of the reality mixed with subconscious thoughts and fears and possibly, unspoken wishes.

3.4.3 Dream as a fulfillment of wish in *The Vikings of Helgeland*

A new approach to the main characters in *The Vikings of Helgeland* and one which I think is more appropriate for analyzing them in relationship to Gunnar's dream is to use Psychoanalysis and Psychoanalytical Character Analysis. When we try to explain the reason why Gunnar's dream has a specific content, besides considering the possibility that it is a prediction, is to explore the various layers of Gunnar's subconscious and the hidden desires and wishes that may not be so obvious or directly indicated in the play but which can give a new perspective on the character's mind and feelings as a human being.

One of the unspoken wishes can be Sigurd's death and I think, Hjørdis is not the only one who has this wish. Even though Gunnar never shows hatred or the will to undertake revenge against his friend, it is very possible that somewhere in the secret depth of his heart he knows, Sigurd's death would make him the leading Viking and a deserved husband of the woman he worships. He might not even realize this but his subconscious must be telling him the bitter truth. He is an honest and faithful man which is why he cannot accept such ideas but it does not mean they must be excluded. His dream might be a good proof that such shameful thoughts might sometimes have crossed his mind.

Let us start from the point where we can say that the principle of presenting dreams in the play corresponds to the psychoanalytic vision of how and why people remember dreams and why they remember some of the dreams they see in their sleep while some others disappear from their memories either leaving only a certain emotion as a trace or a few images or almost nothing one could hold onto when one would try to recall the content of the dream.

We know from the text of the play that Gunnar was having troublesome dreams and nightmares before the significant dream he tells Hjørdis; however, he does not say anything about their content and does not even seem to remember anything from them except that they concerned Thorolf: "Jeg kunde ikke sove; det voldte mig urolige Drømme, dette – dette, som hændte med Thorolf; det bares mig for, som han kom – naa ja, jeg vaagned;" (2006:427). Gunnar can only recall that in his dream Thorolf came to him and he remembers the uneasy feeling while sleeping and after awaking. Contrary to those dreams, he remembers very well the details of the dream where he killed Sigurd. This shows how well Ibsen calculated everything in order to underline how important this precise night dream is for Gunnar and, of course, for the story as a whole.

According to the Theory of Psychoanalysis, humans dream every time they sleep but they do not remember every dream. Even the dreams people remember after awakening are not equally important or meaningful for them. In literary texts we may find that characters might have several or many dreams but they do not tell all of them and the ones they tell have significant content and they are usually in one way or another related to the story and often have power to influence the character's mental or emotional state. The subject of how and why a writer introduces a night dream in his text has been discussed by psychoanalysts. For example, Mardi Jon Horowitz has raised some very interesting questions regarding the connection between dreams in real life and those in literature.

If people dream every time they sleep, why do they remember only some of these dreams and why are some more powerful and important than others? How does the use of dreams in literary texts correspond to this principle? - How does an author choose the content of the dream and what is the purpose of introducing the dream in the text? (Horowitz 1995:33).

Psychoanalytic Character Analysis strongly suggests treating the literary characters like real persons, so their dreams can be categorized as we would categorize the dreams of any human. When considering this, it is important to find out to which category Gunnar's night dream would belong. There are two types of night dreams, lucid and nonlucid. Nonlucid dreams are usually not remembered after awakening and if the dreamer recalls something it can be only in fragments.

Importantly, the contextual structures and conscious experiences of nonlucid dreams tend not to contribute episodic memories to the waking personality... Although it is common to recall the fragments of dreams upon awakening, it is likely that the great majority of our night dreams are not remembered at all. (DeGracia 2000:272).

Nonlucid dreams may arise from the memories of the waking life of the dreamer but not to a broad extent therefore they are less likely to be analyzed or be used in understanding a person's subconscious. On the contrary, lucid dreams are mostly very well remembered by the dreamer and they often appear to be meaningful or somewhat related to person's waking life. "Just as important, lucid dreams are remembered after awakening with a much higher frequency than nonlucid dreams, probably due to the presence of a *mental set to remember* in

lucid dreams." (DeGracia 2000:273). In the light of these statements we can claim that Ibsen gives both nonlucid and lucid dreams in *The Vikings of Helgeland*. The dreams from which Gunnar can only remember uneasy and troubling sensations are nonlucid dreams and the one he tells his wife is a lucid dream because it has all the characteristics of this type of dream: The dreamer recalls all the details and content very well, its elements are directly linked to events from Gunnar's waking life, the dream has strong emotional power over him and the character is conscious of the fact that the dream's reality is not adequate with the waking reality but still it is somehow relevant bearing in mind the previous events.

Still we cannot say that the dream can always easily and directly be associated with the dreamer's life or conscious thoughts. When we pass the level of a superficial interpretation of the dream's meaning, deeper layers may show that it contains many more clues and implications than we could see on the surface.

Dreams are series of images, chiefly visual, although auditory, tactile, kinesthetic, and other forms of images and words may also occur. During a dream, ideas and feelings that are unfamiliar to waking life may emerge: raw hostility, strange erotic fantasies, new ideas, prophetic statements, and forgotten memories are commonplace in dreams. (Horowitz 1995:33).

When we look at the dream from this perspective, the fact that in the dream Gunnar kills Sigurd because Hjördis wished it so, becomes worth reconsidering. As I have already said before, she had not mentioned to her husband that she wanted Sigurd dead, so it can be considered as a pure prediction of the future that Gunnar was fulfilling her will by killing him in the dream. If we look at this from a more critical and psychoanalytic point of view, it will become logical to think that this aspect in the dream is nothing less than the fact that Gunnar knows his wife very well and can perfectly guess what can be on her mind in this or that situation. He knows how much pride and reputation means to Hjördis and once these are hurt, she will make no compromise to have her revenge, even if it comes at the price of destruction and death.

The wish of Gunnar to be dead instead of Sigurd can also be interpreted as a fulfillment of Gunnar's wish. He, who has always been known as a brave, honest and respected Viking is so ashamed and embarrassed of the present events and of his new image in society and especially, in his wife's eyes, that it is not difficult to believe that he subconsciously wishes to

be dead. In his situation, death might be easier to accept than the shame and embarrassment of being a liar and a coward.

To understand this point well it is necessary to go deeper in concepts like guilt, shame, embarrassment and pride.

3.4.4 Shame, guilt, embarrassment and pride in *The Vikings of Helgeland*

We might ask ourselves the questions: why did not Gunnar take up the challenge of killing the bear? Does this mean that he is a coward? The original reason why Sigurd offered his help to Gunnar was to guarantee him his proud reputation as a Viking and as an honorable man who would be worth marrying the finest woman in the area. The fact that Sigurd went to kill the bear does not mean that Gunnar was not brave or strong or fearless. We must remember the exact situation in which both friends were so that our judgments about their decision is logical. As I have already mentioned in this chapter, both Sigurd and Gunnar fell in love with Hjørdis at the same time but Gunnar was the first to speak about his feelings for her and Sigurd was the one only to hear about those feelings. It was the unwritten law of brotherhood and friendship that did not allow Sigurd to declare his love for Hjørdis and accordingly, become a rival to his best friend. We know from the text that Sigurd considers Gunnar as his best friend, a brother who is to him the dearest of all men. Indeed he thinks very highly of him:

Sigurd: Men Gunnar er min fosterbroder; fred og venskab har vi svoret hinanden. Baade i strid og i fredsomme kaar har vi fristet lykken tilhobe, og han er mig kærest af alle mænd; hærfærd huer han ikke, saa bold han end er. (2006:374).

As Sigurd tells Dagny, the reason why he instead of Gunnar went to kill the bear was that the latter was valuing life too much at the time on account of his love for Hjørdis and was afraid that if he would die while fighting the bear, he would lose her. It was not death that Gunnar feared but the loss of the chance to be with his beloved.

Sigurd: Men han sagde: «Kvindekær Mand skatter livet høit; uvisst blev Udfaldet, om jeg gik mod Bjørnen, og jeg ræddes for at lade Livet nu; thi saa mistede jeg Hjørdis med.» Længe talte vi sammen, og Enden Blev, at Gunnar gjorde sit Skib rede, men jeg drog mit Sværd, tog Gunnars Hærklæder på og gik til Buret. (2006:389).

Of course, the truth would never see the light since it would cast a shadow over Gunnar's name as a true Viking. Being a strong and brave fighter was the most important quality for man in the Viking era. If a man could not fight or was afraid of challenges and was not ready to give his life to reach his goal, this man would not be considered as a real Viking, hence his manhood and masculinity would be called into question. For Gunnar, losing the status of the strongest and bravest Viking meant being disgraced in front of people and most importantly, in front of Hjørdis. Considering that for Hjørdis the main and probably the only reason for staying with Gunnar was her status as the wife of the bravest Viking in the area. there are a number of proofs of such thinking, especially in the relationship between Hjørdis and Gunnar. Hjørdis is extremely proud of her husband; his brave deed seems to be the only feature that matters when she is speaking of him.

Hjørdis: Sigurd er en navnkundig Drabsmand, men djærvere Daad øvede Gunnar, da han dræbte Hvidbjørnen udenfor mit Bur. (2006:369).

Hjørdis: Sigurd stred mod otte mænd og var fuldt rustet; Gunnar gik til mit bur ved mørk nat, fældte bjørnen, som havde tyve mænds styrke, og bar dog kun et kort sakssværd i hånden. (ibid.:404)

It is obvious how much she values and worships strength and courage. If the status of being the wife of the first Viking in the area is taken away from her, she can suddenly change her attitude and instead of being proud of her husband, be ashamed of him and of herself too. The only salvation and comfort in this case can be another great deed which would once more make her husband the bravest and strongest of all men.

Hjørdis: En berømmelig Daadd har du øvet paa Island, men større Daad maa her øves, ifald ikke din – din Frille skal skamme sig over dig og over sig selv! (2006:372).

Hjørdis: Hjemad, hjemad! Aldrig blev det mig spaaet, at jeg skulde friste Livet som en ussel Frilleviv; men skal jeg bære dette liv og denne Skændsel, bære det en eneste Dag længere, saa maa min Husbond øve Noget – noget, som gør ham navnkundigere end alle andre Mænd! (2006:373).

There is one nuance worth underlining: Hjørdis does not care about being lied to by her life companion who is supposed to be honest and true to her. She does not reproach Gunnar for hiding the truth and is not hurt the same way most women would be hurt in such a situation. Unlike most of women, who would consider a lie to be a deadly poison for their relationship, all that matters for Hjørdis immediately after hearing the truth about her husband is for her husband to restore her pride and honour by killing Sigurd. Otherwise the only alternative for her is to kill herself and thus to avoid living in shame. Only after talking with Sigurd and learning about his love for her, does she begin to imagine what her life would have been like had she known the truth from the very start. However, even then she is not concerned about the fact that Gunnar lied to her.

Hjørdis's addiction to power and fame goes even farther. Her sexual attraction and passion is also based on the strength and fame of her partner. According to her, the only time when she felt real lust and attraction towards Gunnar was when she was kidnapped the night of the great deed. Only the man for which she felt this lust was Sigurd.

Hjørdis: Ja, een Gang, kun een eneste; det var hiin Nat, da Gunnar sad hos mig i Buret; han krystede mig i Favn saa Brynjen brast, og da, da –! (2006:396).

Hjørdis: Det var den eneste Gang; aldrig, aldrig siden! Jeg tænkte, at jeg var slagen med Trolddom; thi at Gunnar så kunde favne en Kvinde... (ibid.:397)

It is obvious that Gunnar would never dare telling her the truth because it would mean losing her in every way and in addition to this, disgracing himself as a man.

I must note that Hjørdis is not an exception when it come to being proud of a husband's strength and priority among other men. Even Dagny, who is a feminine, soft, obedient and very peaceful person becomes excited when she hears that her husband is the real hero. Like Hjørdis she also cannot stand to be reminded that her husband is not the strongest Viking, especially, when she knows it is not true. If before she was completely fulfilling the role of an ideal woman and wife by always following her husband's will, when Hjørdis keeps comparing

Sigurd to Gunnar and underlining her husband's superiority, even Dagny's obedience reaches its limits. Despite Sigurd's continued and insistent demands to be silent and keep the secret, she declares the truth in front of everyone. Pride and satisfaction is easy to hear in her words.

Dagny (*i bevægelse*): Bolde Husbond! Du øved hin Stordaad; – o, det burde jeg tænkt; Ingen, uden du, var dertil istand! (2006:390).

Dagny (*i stærkt oprør*): Der feiler du, Hjørdis, – og ret nu skal Alle vide, at du lever under ræd Mands Tag! (ibid.:422).

Pride is indeed a leading power in the relationship between the people in the play. This feeling is explained by Herant Katchadourian, a professor of psychiatry and human biology as "a feeling of pleasure and satisfaction that we take in our accomplishments and good deeds, as well as in the achievements of those that we care about." (Katchadourian 2010:19).

Even though announcing Sigurd as the bravest and strongest Viking does not make Gunnar either weak or a coward, the fact that he lied to everyone by saying that he killed the bear, still makes him less honorable and less respected by people. If before he stood before Sigurd (**Engammel mand** (*blandt gæsterne*). Skal sandhed siges, saa er Gunnars daad ypperligere end alt, hvad mænd har øvet; Gunnar er den djærveste helt, og dernæst Sigurd. (2006:405)), now he is second strongest man after him.

Gunnar is obviously put to shame and embarrassment. He has every reason to feel guilty for building his relationship with Hjørdis on a lie. Obviously, the family they have created is based on a lie too. In my opinion this knowledge must have been bothering Gunnar from the very beginning but as long as the secret was safe with his friend, he could live with it. When this armour is destroyed, he has to face everything of which he was afraid and most importantly, his self-esteem falls which is the normal result of feeling shame and embarrassment.

Shame and guilt are rich human emotions that serve important functions at both individual and relationship levels. On the one hand, as moral emotions, shame and guilt are among our most private, intimate experiences. In the face of transgression and error, the self turns towards the self - evaluating and rendering judgment. Thus, shame and guilt can guide our behavior and influence who we

are in our own eyes. On the other hand, shame and guilt are inextricably linked to the self in relationship with others. (Tangney and Dearing 2002:2).

When we start to explain Gunnar's mental, emotional and moral state from this perspective, discussing Gunnar's night dream as a fulfillment of a wish becomes logical and the hidden layers of his subconscious thoughts start to uncover themselves in front of our eyes. It is therefore logical that all of these emotions would be reflected in his dream. While sleeping, when Gunnar can no longer control his thoughts and imagination, everything he was trying to resist or refuse in the waking life in order to keep up appearances, finds a way out.

In Gunnar's case we are dealing with several emotions. We can start with a feeling of guilt as a result of lying to Hjørdis and taking from her the chance of living with Sigurd who would have been a true soul mate and given her the life for which she always craved. Now he feels ashamed and embarrassed because of what others will think of him. And he knows, Hjørdis is not proud of him anymore. Psychologists analyze these emotions as self-conscious emotions because they are always connected to society's opinions and to the standards it sets to its members.

Psychologists call guilt, shame, embarrassment and pride social emotions because they are heavily dependent on social interactions. They are considered moral emotions because they involve social judgments about how one should and should not behave. (Katchadourian 2010:7).

Shame and guilt are thus both "self-conscious" and "moral" emotions: self-conscious in that they involve self-evaluating the self, and moral in that they presumably play a key role in fostering a moral behavior. (Tangney and Dearing 2002:2).

Still, the emotion that I consider is most strongly reflected in Gunnar's dream is shame. It is shame that can explain his secret wish of being dead. Psychologists consider shame to be most connected to failure and disgrace in other people's eyes and this is exactly what happens in Gunnar's case.

Shame is seen as arising from public exposure and disapproval of some shortcoming or transgression, whereas guilt is seen as more "private" experience

arising from self-generated pangs and conscience. (Tangney and Dearing 2002:14).

There are actually two types of shame: Moral and non-moral. Non-moral shame results from public exposure of defects that lead to loss of social status; in that sense, it may overlap with embarrassment. Moreover, non-moral shame also entails a sense of personal inadequacy, incompetence, and failure that are socially more damning and lead to loss of respect... Moral shame has traditionally been associated with dishonor... (Katchadourian 2010:16-18).

According to Lewis, shame is a more painful experience for a person than guilt because the first is directly connected to a person's self-evaluation and to his dignity. When we feel ashamed of ourselves, we become smaller in our own eyes and, therefore, no longer live up to the ideals and standards we set for ourselves: "...shame results from the comparison of the self's action with self-standards, and that socialization provides the wherewithal for the process of comparison as well as the standards themselves." (Lewis 1992:10). He strongly focuses on the fact that these standards are developed in relationship to the environment in which we are raised and live. It starts from the time of our childhood and continues through our development as a person. These statements are perfectly compatible with Gunnar's social status and experiences.

3.5 Symbols in *The Vikings of Helgeland*

Gunnar's night dream is not charged with significant symbols, hence it is difficult to suppose that the dream is talking through the symbols. However, this does not make it less powerful or less meaningful. We could see from the interpretation of Gunnar's dream that it raises many questions regarding the moral and emotional state of the dreamer and shows a deep insight into the situation in which the characters found themselves after the truth was revealed.

There is no precise information about the murder weapon in the dream, but the murder itself has a symbolic meaning. According to the dictionary of dreams to have committed a murder symbolizes either putting an end to a way of thinking from the past or it shows the dreamer's hidden aggression towards the victim or towards himself.

To dream that you have committed a murder indicates that you are putting an end to an old habit and a former way of thinking. This could also refer to an end to an addiction. Alternatively, the dream indicates that you have some repressed aggression or rage at yourself or at someone. Note also that dreams of murder occur frequently during periods of depression.

((<http://www.dreammoods.com/dreamdictionary/m4.htm#Murder>)).

If we adapt the symbolic meaning of murder to Gunnar's situation, we can say that by killing Sigurd in his dream, Gunnar puts an end to the faithful and devoted friendship that was connecting them in the past. He also puts an end to his beliefs and moral standards that would never before allow him to kill an innocent man, especially his own friend. In addition to this there is a considerable stress and despair that Gunnar is experiencing. He is dealing with shame, embarrassment, guilt and it is not devoid of foundation to think that he feels unconscious rage towards Sigurd or towards himself. Gunnar's rage to himself is actually very logical because he is the one who built his family life on a lie.

There is one very interesting symbol in the play. Even though it does not appear in the dreams of Gunnar, the meaning it carries is very useful in understanding some characteristics of Hjørdis's personality and the nature of the relationship between her and her husband. This symbol is an arrow. In the *Dictionary of Symbolism* arrow is related to masculinity and supreme power as well as with love and conjunction.

The arrow is a highly phallic image, evoking notions of piercing, penetrating masculinity, becoming the predominant symbol of the holy Father and of fathers in general. Related to this are the arrows of Cupid, the sharp ones of gold represent love, and the blunt ones of lead represent the dispelling of love. It is also associated with the rays of the sun, and with hunting. As the weapon of Apollo, it signifies the light of supreme power. Often paired with the HEART, and when it pierces through it is thought of as a symbol of conjunction. Has many other combinations: arrow with cross (affliction), horse-shoe (androgyny), fire (Christ). (Protas 2001).

We know from the play that Hjørdis is making a bow and an arrow to kill Sigurd: "Hjørdis sidder paa Bænken lige for det mindre Høisæde beskæftiget med at flætte en Buesnor; paa

Bordet ligger en Bue og nogle Pile.” (2006:425). In my opinion, this weapon tells us a lot about her. First of all, the symbolic meaning of an arrow perfectly describes her strong, almost manly personality. She is not like other women in the play. We know that she is always craving for a fight, great deeds, blood and revenge which are more suitable for men than for women. She does not only encourage her husband to fight but wants to live a life of a warrior herself. Her dominance in the relationship with Gunnar is obvious. She is making the decisions that a man in the family should be making. She speaks on the meetings like men would do and she does not obey to others, neither men nor women. Her foster father is as powerless against her stubbornness as her husband is.

Hjördis is planning to kill Sigurd with the arrow. This can be understood as a symbolization of her conjunction with him. We know that when Hjördis realizes, she cannot be with Sigurd in this life, she decides to join him in the kingdom of the dead. For her killing Sigurd is a victory against the cruel reality which does not permit their reunion. By putting the arrow in his heart, Hjördis tries to put an end to this reality. In the end she does not reach her dream of being with Sigurd after death because the latter tells her that he is a Christian.

Last symbol I want to comment is a black horse. The Dictionary of Symbolism shows that horse is very rich in symbolic meanings.

The horse is quite often a solar symbol, and in the Bible it is one of intelligence. According to its color, a horse may symbolize either destruction or victory (fiery-red and white, respectively). It is a maternal archetype, and it might also symbolize "impulsiveness, impetuosity of desire, the instinctive impulses that motivate man. This association of the horse with darker human drives, such as virility and sexuality, has been resented by numerous writers [(Nietzsche)]. In dreams, the black horse of death and destruction is synonymous with misery" (Julien, 2007). Is connected in many ways with aspects of the earth, specifically the SUN, MOON, and WATER. In addition, it is related to air and wind, acting as the mediator between heaven and earth. (Protas 2001).

Black horse is associated with death and destruction. In *The Vikings of Helgeland* black horses are going to take Hjördis and Sigurd to the kingdom of death. This way they prove their symbolic meaning as the mediators between heaven and earth.

The discussed symbols add power to the images and events in the play. They help us see elements and nuances that are not directly given by the author.

3.6 Conclusion

Analyzing the night dream in *The Viking of Helgeland* by using the Theory of Psychoanalysis and the theory about guilt, shame, pride and embarrassment, shows how concentrated it is with different aspects of human emotions, conscious and subconscious issues and how important it is in understanding not only Gunnar's personality and his emotional state but also in learning more about relationships and values.

Finally I want to add one more reason why I think that Ibsen does not use a night dream as a pure prophecy of the future but that it is more like a step from a situation to an action, from conflict to revenge. The dream, on the one hand, makes it easier for Hjørdis to speak out about the rage she's been carrying in her heart and, on the other hand, it gives her the idea of asking her husband to defend and save her pride and name. Before she had heard of Gunnar's dream, Hjørdis was making a bow from her own hair and planning to kill Sigurd herself, but after she gave the task to her husband. If Ibsen really wanted to prove a night dream could be an indubitable picture of the future, why would he change the prediction and let one character make a conscious decision as did Gunnar when deciding to refuse to kill Sigurd and in this way to let Hjørdis be herself and do what seems so natural considering her personality i.e. for her to kill Sigurd.

As we can see, in the end of the play only a part of the dream is realized: Hjørdis's love for Sigurd is revealed and Sigurd is killed. However he is not killed by Gunnar as was the prognosis in the dream and as I have already explained, the rest of it is not a pure prediction either. It is more logical and right to look at it as at information and knowledge, experience and thoughts that settle in a person's subconscious and find their way out through a night dream just as psychoanalysts believe.

In my opinion, considering the night dream in *The Vikings of Helgeland* as much more than just a prediction of the future gives more value to the play. In this way it proves to be not simply serving patriotic and nationalistic interests by truthfully repeating major principles of

saga literature which represent concepts of which Norwegian people could be proud, but being a valuable drama which shows characters with complex personalities. While reading the play our attention in the first place is attracted not by its heroic-patriotic spirit, but by the evolving and interesting development of the story, by intrigues and feelings characters have to deal with, by the complexity of their personalities and by the amazing mastership of the author who looked so deeply into human nature and understood the deepest and secret nuances of the human subconscious. This night dream can be one of the proofs why *The Vikings of Helgeland* is considered to have a touch of realism.

Henrik Ibsen shows that there is no such thing as fate or destiny. We create our own future and if dreams have something to do with it, they may only serve as bridges from the subconscious to the conscious, from hesitation to decision and action. This can very well be seen in his later plays, one example of which is *Little Eyolf* which is the subject of the next chapter.

4 Importance of night dream in *Little Eyolf*

In the previous chapter I discussed the role of the night dream in *The Vikings at Helgeland* and it proved to be a central point in the plot of the play where conflict reached its zenith and the door to secrets opened. The night dream appeared to be not just the predictive fruit of the sleep of a man full of thoughts and doubts but a key in the play to the understanding of the real nature of marital and family relationships.

The subject of this chapter is Henrik Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*. The play was written in 1894, but Ibsen started working on it in 1893. The text underwent many changes before it reached its final version. As indicated on the official website of the National Library of Norway, "Several central points were only included in the final version, for example Eyolf's handicap and Allmers' expression "the law of transformation"." (National Library of Norway). When we read the final and official version of *Little Eyolf*, the handicap of the child seems to be one of the most important aspects as it provides an answer to many occurrences and complications in the play. If Eyolf had not been handicapped, there would be no need for the parents to feel guilty for their uncontrollable or selfish passion and there would be no necessity for Allmers to give up his personal interests and give his full and undivided attention and care to his son's special needs in his future development. Perhaps, Eyolf would not have had such a symbolic and central role in the play either. This could become a matter for serious argument but it will take us too far from the main topic of my thesis which is night dreams in Ibsen's plays. However it is important to remember that without those "central points" *Little Eyolf* would not make such a relevant material for this thesis.

Henrik Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*, according to Barbara Fass Leavy, "has been analyzed in the context of the "family romance", a term extended beyond its original meaning by some contemporary psychologists to describe a disturbed situation in which a child becomes the focus of the family's abnormal relationships." (Jacobsen and Leavy 1988:242). As we can see scholars have noted that this play deals with some important issues of psychoanalysis when describing its complex and ambiguous relationships between family members. However, what I find quite surprising is that they scarcely touch the topic of night dream in this play as a subject of psychoanalytical observation. On the one hand, scholars explore deeply problems

of Oedipus complex, female sexuality, incest and many other issues of human relationships in the play which gives us such an interesting and many-sided understanding of *Little Eyolf*. On the other hand, not giving any special significance to the night dream while discussing all those issues leaves an empty gap in the whole picture which, in my opinion, is necessary to fill. This is why I want to explore night dreams in this play and see what importance and meaning they carry.

In *Little Eyolf* Henrik Ibsen introduces a night dream of Alfred Almers' which in my opinion takes a significant place in the play when it comes to the relationship between the characters, their mental and emotional state as well as in the development of the various events. There is indirect information about Rita's dream. Even though it is not clearly and literally given in the play, we can say by implication that she is also having dreams about her dead son's wide-open eyes, or to be more precise, she is sure that those eyes will haunt her day and night, in thoughts and in dreams. She tells her husband that she will see Eyolf day and night with his big, open eyes, just as they were when he drowned into the water: "Dag og nat vil han stå for mig, som han lå dernede... Ja, med de store, åbne øjne. Jeg ser dem! Jeg ser dem for mig!" (2009:472).

To prepare the ground for discussion, I want to point out the questions which this chapter of the thesis will try to answer:

1. Why is the night dream important in understanding the personalities of characters and how does it help to unlock their secrets or the different layers of their conscious and subconscious? How does Ibsen's play correspond to the theory of psychoanalysis and what does this fact say about Ibsen as a writer?
1. How does the dream correspond the whole picture of personal relationships in the play?
2. What role does guilt and conscience play in understanding the dream in "Little Eyolf"?
3. What is the meaning of Alfred Almers's dream and which symbols does it contain?

First of all, I want to specify that the theory of psychoanalysis will be the main means of exploring the play and analyzing the night dream in it. The reason why I choose this approach

is that the night dream is the principal subject of this theory and scholars consider it to be the window to a person's subconscious. Many scholars and scientists starting from Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, have discussed the importance of dreams in understanding the mental, spiritual and psychic condition of humans and in my opinion, *Little Eyolf* is a remarkable example of this theory. To illustrate my statement, I will later quote the dream from Ibsen's text and analyze it step by step using the theory of psychoanalysis as well as dream symbolism.

In addition to the theory of psychoanalysis, the theory on guilt and self-conscious emotions will be a good aid in understanding the actions of the characters, conflicts, thoughts and, most importantly, the widely discussed law of change in the play. Again, Sigmund Freud will be one of the scholars whose theory will be a good base for my research.

When we read the play and look at Alfred Allmer's dream in the context of all the occurrences that took place before the moment when the dream comes into the play, the easiest and most logical conclusion we may make is that his dream simply presents his desire of what happened to his son to be not the reality.

4.1 Night dreams as fulfillment of wishes; *Little Eyolf* in relationship with theories of dream interpretation and psychoanalysis

Alfred Allmers, father of Eyolf, dreams of his dead son and tells his wife, Rita, about this dream. He says:

Jeg drømte om Eyolf inat. Jeg synes, jeg så ham komme op fra bryggen. Han kunde springe, ligesom andre gutter. Det var altså ingenting hændt ham. Hverken det ene eller det andre. Den kvælende virkelighed var altså bare en drøm, tænkte jeg. Å, hvor jeg takked og velsigned – (*holder inde*) hm – (2009:479-480).

As we can see, in Allmers's dream his dead son has returned to life and even better, he is entirely healthy. His handicap has been corrected and he can now live as he always wanted to; he can run and jump like other boys. The bitter reality is just a dream. As I already mentioned,

the first impression we get is that this dream represents the picture Allmers would want to be the reality, an alternative which would make all the imperfections of his life vanish forever. This reality is his wish come true but it exists only in his dream and this is where Sigmund Freud's theory regarding dreams can be brought in.

Freud sees a night dream as a fulfilment of one's wishes and desires. He believes that a dream always comes from the waking reality and is directly connected to a person's experience. In his book *Drømmetydning*, Oslo, 1999, Freud discusses the phenomenon of dream, its forms, symbols and meanings. He shows different ways of interpreting night dreams and explores how they can help one to understand a person's state of mind, libido and subconscious.

Sigmund Freud considers that dreams have to do with reality or the waking life of the dreamer. However, a dream does not only concern the events or experiences that the dreamer had in real life but also the ones he did not intend to have when he was conscious of his activities. When asleep, a person loses control over his desires, wishes and thoughts; therefore the subconscious takes over and, accordingly, memories, yearnings and cravings that the person was trying to avoid, hide or forget rise to the surface. "...drømmen avslører kunnskaper og erindringer som man i våken tilstand ikke mener å ha." (Freud, Skårderud et al. 1999:13). Sometimes it may even seem that the dream is not at all, or on a very low level, linked to the problem, pain or experience of the dreamer, but we should not try to see direct clues in dreams, as they communicate with symbols and what we should search for while trying to understand or interpret dreams are those symbols. Freud quotes Burdach to explain that a dream is a symbolization of reality:

Selv når helle vår sjel har vært fylt av en sak, når vårt indre er blitt opprevet av dyp smerte eller våre ådrelige krefter er blitt satt inn på en oppgave, gir drømmen oss enten noe helt fremmedartet, eller den tar bare noen få elementer fra virkeligheten til sine kombinasjoner - eller den går bare inn i stemningens toneart og symboliserer virkeligheten. (Freud, Skårderud et al. 1999:7).

When we speak about dream symbolism, it is important to remember that most of the symbols have definite meanings in folk wisdom, in mythology and even though these symbols may stand for something else in a dream, we should search for the indirect link with their meanings in folklore, sagas and myths:

Denne symbolikken tilhører ikke drømmen alene, men det ubevisste forestillingsliv, særlig i folket... I en rekke tilfelle er det som er felles for symbolet og det egentlige som det står for, helt åpenbart, i andre tilfelle er det skjult; og valget av symbol synes da gåtefullt. (Freud, Skårderud et al. 1999:259).

I will not go deeper into the theory of dream symbolism by Freud since his main concern in this case are sexual symbols in dreams. However, his statement about hidden or indirect links between the symbol and the meaning of the dream can be well applied to Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*. This subject will be discussed later in the chapter.

In his book *Drømmetydning* Freud touches upon a subject which is often discussed and which also occupies an important place in beliefs, religion and even everyday life - dreams as predictions for the future. He, as a psychoanalyst strongly opposes the idea of predicting the future in any way, including the dreams. As he believes that dreams present our desires and wishes, Freud insists on the fact that the future that dreams show is nothing more than a picture of a nonexistent reality which portrays our desires fulfilled. So this is an imaginary future that has nothing to do with the real one that, as he assertively underlines, is totally unpredictable.

Og drømmens verdi for vårt kjennskap til fremtiden? Det er naturligvis ikke tale om å tenke på noe slikt. Man kunne heller spørre: For vårt kjennskap til fortiden? For drømmen stammer i enhver fra fortiden. Den gamle tro på at drømmen viser oss fremtiden, er ganske visst ikke helt blottet for en smule sannhet. Den fører oss jo inn i fremtiden, idet den fremstiller våre ønsker som oppfylt; men denne fremtid, som drømmen oppfatter som nåtid, er av hans uforgjengelige ønske blitt utformet til et fullendt bilde av fortiden. (Freud, Skårderud et al. 1999:455).

What also makes Freud's theory very interesting in relationship with Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* is that he suggests an interesting observation on dreams where dead persons appear and often act as if they were alive or, in some other way, they have a very strong impact on the dreamer. It is interesting that Freud calls such dreams "absurd" dreams and considers that they come from our thoughts about dead people. He notices that humans tend to think about a dead person would say in this or that case if this person were alive. All of these wonderings, regrets or guilt that might be linked to the dead people create confusion in us and since we do not know

exactly how to understand the dream, as Freud claims, this lack of knowledge leads us to a number of different explanations and interpretations.

Dette at døde personer så ofte opptrer som levende i våre drømmer, handler og omgås oss, har fremkalt en urimelig forundring og mange merkvverdige forklaringer, hvilket tydelig viser vår manglende forståelse for drømmen. (Freud, Skårderud et al. 1999:314).

When we think about Henrik Ibsen's play, Freud's point of view on the relationship between a living and a dead person is worth considering. In *Little Eyolf* the question that rises in Allmers's thoughts after dreaming about his dead son is not what the child would have said or done if he had been alive but what would have happened if Allmers and his wife had been better parents to him, or, more importantly, what are they capable of sacrificing for their son now. This is where Allmers forces Rita to face the most difficult choice - he asks her if she would be ready to leave everything and go to the place where Eyolf is now in order to do what she never did for him, to really know him, understand him, and to be a loving and caring mother for him.

Om du nu havde valget - . Om du kunde følge Eyolf did hen, hvor han nu er-?...

Om du havde fuld forvisning om, at du vilde finde ham igen, - kende ham, -forstå ham -?

Vilde du frivillig gøre springet over til ham? frivilligt gå bort fra alt detter her? Gi' afkald på helle jordlivet? Vilde du det, Rita? (2009:481).

Later in the conversation we learn that these questions are not directed only towards Rita, Allmers has already asked them to himself and knows the answer. In the beginning Rita is trying to find reasons to justify the fact that she does not want to follow Eyolf to the land of the dead. First she says that she would not go there because of Allmers, that she would never want to be separated from him. Afterwards, when Alfred leaves no way of escape from the bitter truth by asking her if she would follow him if he had gone to Eyolf, Rita has no choice but to reveal her real reason for refusing a chance of reunion with her child; she says that she would want to but would not have been able to make such a step, because she is a human being, a living person and earthly life is where living people belong and life is too precious to give up even if it would wash away all the mistakes, selfishness and regrets of the past.

Jeg vilde nok. Å, så gerne!...

Jeg kunde det ikke, - det føler jeg...

For her, i jordlivet, hører vi levende hjemme. (2009:482).

Alfred agrees with her and says that he would not have been able to make such a sacrifice either. In this conversation both Alfred and Rita face their own selfishness and passion for living even when they are in pain, which is one of the characteristics of human nature. All this discussion shows that Allmers's dream is the result of his thoughts, regrets, feeling of guilt and pain. As Freud claims in his theory, such feelings follow us in our sleep and lead us to dreaming about dead ones to whom those feelings are related. It is also easy to see that the dream gives rise to various thoughts and interpretations which in Allmers's case develops into a discussion about the possibilities of correcting the past. Even though it is not directly said in the play, we can consider that Alfred may be thinking that by his appearance in his dreams, Eyolf might be asking for a sacrifice from his parents. After seeing the happy and healthy alternative to the tragic reality, it becomes even more painful for Alfred to be conscious of the results of his and his wife's carelessness.

The fact that Alfred dreams of Eyolf the night after he died, is not very clear in the play since there is no direct indication of night coming and of the characters going to sleep. Since the time of when dreams occur has a special importance for this part of the thesis, I want to make a short disquisition on this subject to avoid misunderstanding. We know from the beginning of the first act that it is early morning: "Det er tidlig sommormorgen i varmt solskinsvejr." (2009:395). Events develop throughout the day. By the time Eyolf drowns in the water it might well be already after noon, almost evening. However we do not find any precise information concerning this in the play. There are several clues in the text that lead me to the idea that Allmer's dream is a result of Eyolf's death. In the beginning of the second act Ibsen writes that it is a gloomy, rainy day with drifting clouds: "Det er en tung, regnfuld dag med drivende tågeskyer." (ibid.:449). This description could be applied to the latter part of the same day but what makes me certain that it must be drawing a picture of another day is that we learn later that Borghejm arrived by afternoon train and is taking a walk in the garden with Rita: "Han kom ud med middagstoget." (ibid.:454). And, finally, Alfred tells Rita that he dreamed of Eyolf that night: "Jeg drømte om Eyolf inat." (ibid.:479). In my opinion, this last example alone would not be enough to claim that the dream occurred the night after Eyolf's death because, even though Alfred says that in his dream the suffocating reality was just a

dream, he could be meaning not Eyolf's death but his handicap, which is no less painful for him. So as to its content, the dream could fit into the text when Eyolf was still alive, as well as after his death.

The fact that Henrik Ibsen introduces a night dream in the play is not just a way to add a sensitive nuance to the text. When we consider the circumstances in which the dream takes place, it becomes clear that the writer carefully chose the time, place, reasons and content for the dream. Alfred Allmers has the dream about little Eyolf soon after his death, not before, and not long after, even though in both cases it would still make sense. If Alfred had dreamed about Eyolf being healthy and happy, a normal little boy, before his death, we would understand that he was worried and deeply concerned about the child's handicap and all the difficulties and limitations he had to face because of this handicap. It would, of course, also include the father's guilt on some level. If the dream had occurred long after Eyolf's death, we would think that Allmers was still haunted by the guilt and still had not recovered from the trauma of his only son's death. Or, one could even see a sign of Allmers making peace with himself by having an image of a healthy and normal boy which Eyolf never got to be in reality. It could have been understood as a kind of hope that in the other world Eyolf's handicap was gone, that he was feeling better where he was now. So we can see how many different alternatives there could be for using the same night dream in a reasonable and interesting way. However, Ibsen chose a definite moment and, in my opinion, it made the dream far more meaningful and conformable to human psychology, not to mention its importance for the plot of the play. To illustrate this statement, I will discuss Allmers's dream in connection with French-Fromm's and Freud's theories about the causes of dreams and the time when they appear.

When and why certain dreams appear in our sleep often has an explanation and reasons. The content of a dream might not always make sense but there are dreams which may very well show a person's state of mind, situation or reflect some events from his life. This is why exploring a dreamer's life and finding out how the dream might correspond with some events is crucial for understanding dreams. T.M. French and E. Fromm suggest that the reason why sometimes dreams do not seem to mean anything "is probably that we do not know how it fits into the context of the patient's life. We should like... to know whether anything has happened recently to stimulate the patient to dream this dream."(French and Fromm 1964:10). In

Allmers's case his son's death and his guilt regarding not being a good father and not sufficiently considering the child's interests is one of the reasons why he dreams this dream.

As for the time when the dream appears, we can say that Ibsen's choice of placing the dream right after the unhappy event is utterly correct from a psychological point of view. Psychoanalysts, in this specific case and Freud himself insist that only recent experiences and impressions can become sources for a dream; only those "on which one has not yet slept." (Freud 1996:119). However, he does not mean that those experiences have to take place the very day before one slept. Even experiences from the distant past may become material for the dreams if one has an emotional connection with those experiences before one sleeps: "The dream may select its material from any period of life, provided only that a chain of thought leads back from the experiences of that day of the dream (the "recent" impressions) of that earlier period." (ibid.). The tragic event of Eyolf's death is fresh and new, the character "has not yet slept" on it and the dream occurs connected to this living painful experience which is the exact case that Freud discusses in his book.

To continue this subject I want to add that Allmer's night dream shows all the signs of a lucid dream. It involves strong emotional stress which the character is definitely undergoing before he sleeps and in sleep too because his mind is still actively working to comprehend the present reality and is trying to imagine possible solutions which could change everything. This solution is portrayed in the healthy image of little Eyolf which would mean that all the mistakes of the past are corrected and that there is a chance for a new life, a chance to save the ideals Allmers had been trying to believe in and make others believe too. However, he realizes that this image of a perfect alternative is not real; it is not congruous with the waking reality. He knows that Eyolf died as a cripple and his two strong feet is not compatible with the true nature of his son's health. All these features correspond with four natural processes that stipulate the occurrence of a lucid dream:

Four natural processes by which lucid dreams occur. They are: 1. emotional stress within the dream; 2. recognition of incongruity within a dream; 3. lucidity arising from the initiation of analytical thought; 4. recognition of the dream-like quality of the experience. (Oldis 2006:8).

Scholars give particular importance to the last element from the characteristics of lucid dream. Perhaps this is what makes lucid dreams so significant for the dreamers. They are aware of

the truth however bitter it might be and experience the falseness of the utopian alternative reality even more strongly. This might also be the reason why people try to find a meaning in lucid dreams more than in nonlucid ones.

The reference to state in a lucid dream is framed by access to memories of waking experience, allowing a *contrast* between one's current situation and the knowledge of waking life. This contrast provides the contextual structure for the metacognitive recognition that the current experience is not a normal waking experience. (Wallace and Kunzendorf 2000:275).

All the statements regarding a dreamer being aware of the fact that the dream reality is not the true reality do not mean that a person who has a lucid dream is completely conscious of the true reality and the false alternative. Lucid dreams include many unconscious elements but they are still related to the experiences that the person encountered in his waking life.

Lucid dream consciousness, like waking and nonlucid dreams, is also framed by unconscious contextual elements. To understand the contextual structure of lucid dreams, we must look at the role played by consciously accessible memory across lucid dreams and waking. Lucid dreams are able to freely recall details of waking life... (Wallace and Kunzendorf 2000:273).

From the discussion about the night dream in the play from a psychoanalytical point of view little Eyolf's death emerged as the painful experience that became the main reason for the occurrence of Allmer's dream. However, deeper study of the text raises other issues tightly linked with this tragic event. Without understanding those issues, we cannot consider the given discussion as comprehensive. To prove my point, I will utilize French's and Fromm's system for dream interpretation.

These scholars introduce a new approach to the interpretation of dreams which is empathic thinking. The term implies involving an interpreter's empathy towards the dreamer while explaining the dream. In this case it depends on the ability of the interpreter to feel and understand a dreamer's state of mind, his situation and see his problem. The most important condition is that the interpreter should be able to walk into the dreamer's shoes. What distinguishes this method from the traditional psychoanalytical approach introduced by Freud is that it considers a problem to be the stimulus for dreams, not wishes and fantasies.

These scholars consider that problems that one may have are not of the same importance and depth. The deepest and most serious problem for that moment becomes the material for the dream. However, this problem can be impelled by wishes:

...there is usually one problem on which deeper problem converge and from which more superficial problems radiate. This was the dreamer's focal problem at the moment of dreaming. Every focal conflict is reaction to some event or emotional situation... The practical, empathic thinking that underlines dreams becomes much more intelligible when we recognize that the functional units in this living process are problems, not wishes or fantasies. Wishes are the dynamic stimuli that activate problems. (French and Fromm 1964:206-207).

Even though Freud's theory of dream interpretation is the main base for this chapter, I cannot ignore such an interesting and insightful opinion. Moreover, if we look closely, these two approaches (Freud's and French-Fromm's) do not actually oppose each other. They merely place the same concepts on different levels of significance and look at the subject from different angles. In the end, both underline the fact that problems and wishes a person has in waking life are to be examined while interpreting a person's dreams.

The reason why I find French-Fromm's approach so well applied to Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* is that it permits me to go farther back into the characters' lives and explore the problems that lead them to certain actions and choices and that it helps me to unravel the way to a deeper understanding of Allmer's dream. Such an approach to the problem requires analyzing the relationships between the characters in the play.

4.2 *Little Eyolf* - a symbolized picture of crippled relationships

In *Little Eyolf*, as in all of his plays, Henrik Ibsen's major topic of interest is human relationships, especially, relationships between family members or, more specifically, between a man and a woman. It is not for no reason that *Little Eyolf* is considered as a "family romance" or a family drama. Everything that happens to Eyolf is caused by the actions and decisions of his parents as if he was a painting that was created step by step to reflect each and every new mistake, lie, selfish act, secret, sin and transgression that would take place in the family; no matter if it had happened before he was even born or after he was already crippled.

..."child" is a composite figure, representing the characters' many-faceted failures. Eyolf symbolizes the crippled marriage of Allmers and Rita. Rita married Allmers out of passion, a passion which denies the right of Eyolf to exist at all... Allmers, for his part, married to acquire "gold" and "green forests", to preserve "the family", and, by implication, to save himself from an incestuous love for Asta... (Otten:84).

Eyolf was the fruit of an unhealthy relationship and he was never loved as a child should be loved by parents because they did not see him as their child but more of someone odd. He was never like other children, like other people and was never treated as such. Even his death was a kind of mystery; he left no physical evidence of his death, his body was never found: he did not even leave any physical evidence of his existence, only a feeling of guilt and the open wound of knowing the truth about their own selves. Ironically, the only thing that remains after Eyolf's death is his crutch - the symbol of a cripple: "Krykken flyder!" (2009:448). The crutch is left floating on the surface of the sea as if it were symbolizing the characters deepest secrets, their regrets and that their mistakes come floating onto the surface of their consciousness. As Arne Røed says, Eyolf's death intensifies the conflicts and forces the characters to face the truth.

Eyolf's body is never found. This is a point emphasized in the play: a current has brought him far into the sea. But that does not mean that the conflicts he embodied have now been removed. He left behind the central symbol of the play,

the cripple's badge... Rita and maybe the others will always have ringing in their ears the words that carried the message of death: 'Krykken flyder, krykken flyder'... The conflict is insoluble, the scar is permanent. (Rød:86).

There are many aspects of the truth they have to face. Terry Otten has already pointed out the selfish passion of Rita and of Allmer's intentions to make a profit out of Rita's fortune in order to secure Asta's future and at the same time to escape his non brotherly feelings for his sister. Thorkil Vanggaard also believes that Eyolf's death accelerates the already started developments and strips off the masks from characters to show the real nature of their relationship.

Dette træk af skæbnen fremskynder brat den allerede igangværende udvikling udover bristepunktet, så konstellationen mellom de tre revner, og dens bestanddele lægges frem i det åbne: den tætte tilknytning mellom bror og søster, hustruens udelukkelse fra dette forhold, og ægtemandens direkte modvilje mod hende. (Vanggaard 1983:170).

These reasons are the basis of the family's crookedness. Both husband and wife are so absorbed in their passions and interests that there is no care and love left for the little one.

To start with Rita; she is usually discussed by scholars as an extremely selfish woman, who puts her own femininity and sexuality over her maternal responsibilities. She wants to be everything to her husband and wants to have his full and undivided attention and love. She believes that if Allmers decides to take care of Eyolf and try to give him attention more than before, she will lose her role as a woman and a lover and will remain only a mother a role which is not acceptable for her: "Jeg kan ikke gå her og bare være Eyolfs mor. Bare det. Ikke noget mere. Jeg vil ikke, Siger jeg! Jeg kan ikke! Jeg vil være alt for deg! For deg, Alfred!" (2009:437). Thoralf Klavenæs strongly underlines this point and says that the child means nothing to Rita: "Hun vil ikke dele mandens kjærlighet med barnet. Barnet er intet for hende." (**Klavenæs:96**). We know from the text that she did not want to have a child in the first place. Giving birth to Eyolf is only associated with pain and compromise. She only had Eyolf to please her husband and sometimes even wishes she never had him: "Så vilde jeg ønske, at jeg aldri hadde født ham." (2009:436). "Jeg fødte ham til verden under så usigelig pine. Men jeg bar det allsammen med jubel og fryd for din skyld." (ibid.:437).

When we look at Rita from such a point of view, she seems to be a kind of monster, but if we try to use empathic thinking, her personality and the way she sees her life and people around her, will make more sense and we will even feel compassion towards her.

Rita is not fully self-realized, nor loved and satisfied as a woman, or as a person. Allmers does not return her passion and devotion with any kind of love. We learn later that he married her for her money which he mainly needed to take care of his half-sister whom he secretly loves. Rita can guess what kind of relationship there is between brother and sister, especially after Alfred inadvertently calls out his sister's sobriquet at a moment of physical closeness with his wife. This is the moment when Eyolf falls from the table and becomes a cripple. The child turns into a symbol of unhealthy connections between the characters. "Eyolf became a cripple at the exact moment when Allmers told Rita about the most secret part of his relationship with Asta." (Røed:70).

This is why Rita sees Asta as a competitor both in her husband's and in her son's love. Rita tells Alfred Allmers that Eyolf never fully belonged to her because Asta always stood between her and her child: "Eyolf vilde aldrig la' sig fange helt og faldt ind til mig... Asta stod og stængte vejen for mig." (2009:476). The name Eyolf was a reminder of Asta's and Alfred's close relationship which was impenetrable for her. She could always feel that there was no place for her in that relationship.

Arne Røed develops an interesting approach to Rita's relationship to Eyolf. He looks at the situation from a biological point of view and explains Rita's protest against loving a little cripple child with laws of nature:

On the surface she hates him because she is jealous; he absorbs too much of her husband's attention. But it goes much deeper than that. She hates him because he is cripple. Humans have, during their thousands of years of civilized existence, developed the ability to protect and even love the misfits, the unhealthy, the crippled. No other species does; nature rejects ruthlessly any kind of abnormality, and Rita, sensual, passionate, is very close to nature. It is the healthy part of Rita that rejects Eyolf... to Rita Eyolf is something evil, something monstrous, something that convention may demand that she should love, but which so offends against that which nature had meant her to be... (Røed:77).

Such a perception of Rita's character is an alternative to the usual judgmental attitude that is seen among other scholars. Arne Røed displays a good example of empathic thinking. He does not claim that Rita is right not to love her own son just because he is not as healthy and perfect as she would want her child to be, but he tries to find some justification that would help us relate more to the situation of the character.

When we speak about Alfred Allmers, Eyolf's handicap makes more sense and gains a more symbolic meaning. Scholars link the child's physical disability to Allmers's true face and to his failure as a man, person, husband, brother and father. His wrong decisions and choices, unhealthy relationships and delusive way of life is fully symbolized in his son's physical state.

...his physical defect illustrates the truth about him much better. He had to be cripple because of Allmers' relationship with the two women was so unsatisfactory that he was unable to produce any other kind of offspring. In the plot the origin of Eyolf's handicap is referred to a set of specific events in the past. He was not born a cripple, but turned into one through the shortcomings of his father. (Røed:66).

It is easy to judge Alfred for his mistakes but again, to really understand him, we should try to develop empathy towards him and look at his life from a different angle. Alfred is not happy. Everything in his life is the opposite of what he wants to have. He is stuck fast in the marriage that obliges him to deal with Rita's demanding lust and passion, to hold himself from love for Asta which is far from being just brotherly and finally, he feels responsible for Eyolf's life and knows that he so far has not been a good father. Alfred tries to find a solution to all of this. His trip to the mountains symbolizes his attempt to overcome his own interests and move to a higher level where he will devote his life to Eyolf's care, education and development. He abandons writing his book on human responsibilities, which was supposed to become the work of his life and reaches for a new dream which he hopes, will bring him some relief. Arne Røed considers this as an acceptance of death on the part of Alfred:

His whole life has become an insoluble problem; but as soon as he accepts death, he finds himself on the other side of the lake - the problem is solved, death is the solution... By formally abandoning his work on the book, he symbolically abandons all the responsibility for his own life, and embraces his last daydream: that he is going to bring up his son, a timid little cripple, to face life, and to carry

on his father's work. This is what accepting death means to Allmers." (Rød:85-86).

Allmers's decision may seem full of devotion and unselfishness as he is determined to give up all of his personal interests for his child. He says that it is not possible to leave something for himself if he wants to give his little cripple Eyolf all possible opportunities. He wants to raise his son so that he would be a good successor of his father's work or to be able to find his own aim in life: "Eyolf skal ta' mit livsværk op. Ifald han så vil. Eller han kan få vælge noget, som er fuldt ud hans eget." (2009:424). Alfred is open minded enough to give Eyolf freedom of choice for his future, but the unlucky detail here is that what Eyolf dreams of becoming is already out of the restricted number of possibilities he has left because of his handicap. Everyone realizes very well that no matter how much the boy wants it or how hard Alfred would try to help him, Eyolf will never become a soldier.

Alfred's seemingly unselfish decision is actually one more try to escape his guilty conscious and undesirable present. By setting himself a goal for the future, he once again can put distance between him and the reality. One significant nuance about his decision is that he does it not because he loves the child but because he feels responsible for him. However he is not strong enough to admit it, Rita persistently underlines this factor : "...du har i grunden aldrig havt rigtig kærlighet til ham..." (2009:475). In my opinion, this is one of the reasons why Eyolf has to die, go away from Allmers. His intentions are not sincere, honest and unselfish and such an unhealthy relationship cannot have a future. Self-delusion cannot last for long. There must be an awakening. In this case, Eyolf's death is the awakening. Rat Wife's advent serves nothing else but a stripping off of the curtain of lies from the characters' eyes and making the two face their dark, inmost selves.

Until the death of the child... there is no present for the central characters. Allmers embraces either the past in Big Eyolf (Asta) or the future in Little Eyolf. Only when the child dies, is he confronted with the present. It is the Rat-Wife who forces Allmers to face reality. She offers to rid his house of any "gnawing thing"; and, of course, Eyolf is the "gnawing thing", the plague visited upon Allmers and Rita. Alfred seemingly rejected his past when he decided to stop work on his book on "human Responsibility" and turned to the future, vowing to actualize Eyolf's "infinite possibilities". the Rat-wife shatters his dream and leaves him with no recourse but to accept the full weight of his failure. (Otten:87).

The same can be applied to Rita when it comes to looking into the eyes of truth. Before Eyolf's death she never feels guilty or responsible for the child's handicap. She does not find it natural or necessary to love her son and considers that it is right to want all the love and care from her husband only for herself. Only when Eyolf dies, she looks at her relationship with Alfred from a different angle and sees how false and one-sided it is. The death of her child awakens a guilty conscience in her for the first time and brings her to the point, where she can start taking responsibilities for others: "Først da dette omkommer, og samvittigheden falder over hende, vaagner det menneskelige ansvar - og hun gaar tilbage til sin barn. ...Eyolf fører hende tilbage til hjemmet og det menneskelige ansvar." (Klavenæs:96-97).

So we see that by reviewing the relationships between the characters we are lead to bad conscience and guilt - the two main reasons why little Eyolf haunts their thoughts day and night. It is guilt that can be felt so vividly in Allmers's night dream. Therefore I consider it necessary to explore this area deeper by using theories about the feeling of guilt.

4.3 Guilt and transformation in *Little Eyolf*

Guilt is undoubtedly one of the most common although one of the most powerful feeling human can undergo. Guilt may destroy a person spiritually and mentally. This is why people usually try to either refuse to confront the fact that they are responsible for actions that might make them feel guilty or they try to do everything to correct the results of their actions and thus calm their guilty conscience; however, not everyone is capable of feeling guilt and different people experience it on different levels. Herant Katchadourian develops a very interesting theory about guilt and its place in human relationships. According to the scholar, whether one feels guilty or not for what one did depends on several considerations such as: *international, controllability and consequences*. He says that if one did not mean to hurt someone, guilt is less likely to appear and even less, if one had no control over the happening. However, the consequences of one's actions make an important impact on the level of guilt. Personality plays a big role in guilt-proneness, as well as the kind of life and relationships a person has: "...guilt-prone individuals are likely to have less satisfactory personal relationships." (Katchadourian 2010:74). This applies well to the characters in *Little Eyolf*,

especially to Alfred Allmers. We could see from part two (2.2) of this chapter, Alfred is deeply unhappy in his marriage and the relationship with his half-sister he does not find satisfactory. Guilt is one of the major factors in Ibsen's *Little Eyolf* that affects the characters' relationships and lead them to certain actions. After spending time alone high up in the mountains, Allmers decides to be a better father to his little son, Eyolf, who is a cripple because his parents put their own sexuality and pleasure over the care of the helpless baby. He shares his thoughts with his wife Rita and says that he has not been taking care of Eyolf as a father should. He has never been close to him and never tried to understand him. Allmers says that at home he could never be alone, on his own to listen to himself and hear his inner voice. This is why he went to the mountains and there he realized what truly matters are to be a good father for his son and to help him to develop himself in order to explore all the possibilities he may have in life and feel happy.

Before, when he was always in people's company, when he had to consider what others expected from him as a member of society, when he was surrounded with passionate love and the desires of his wife, Allmers could not see how deeply Eyolf's requirements had taken root in him:

Dybere og dybere har stakkets lille Eyolf taget plads i mig. Efter det ulykkelige fald fra bordet -. Og mest efter at vi har visshet for, at det er uopretteligt - (2009:423).

It is not hard to observe a strong feeling of guilt in Allmers's words. It is clear that the accident of the baby, Eyolf falling from the table while his parents were making love, left a deep scar on his conscience and this scar became even deeper when they learned that their son's condition was irreparable. This conforms with Katchadourian's statement about the relationship between the consequences of one's actions and the level of guilt a person can experience.

This observation raises some questions: Would Allmers have felt guilty for leaving his baby boy without attention if his injury had not been so serious? Would he have decided to abandon his private activities in order to give himself fully to the education and development of his child? And, what is particularly interesting, is why Alfred Allmers, father of Eyolf, the first one to show a feeling of guilt and remorse for what happened in the past and not the mother?

How can we explain this? What is the reason that some people can feel guilty more easily than others and what in a person defines the capability of feeling guilty?

Katchadourian suggests several explanations about this subject. He claims that

The key personality requirement for feeling guilty is the capacity for *empathy*. Empathy ("feel in") means projecting oneself into another person - putting oneself in another's shoes. It entails both understanding and sharing the feelings of another person. (Katchadourian 2010:74).

Can we say that Alfred Allmers has empathy towards Eyolf? On the one hand, one can conclude that yes, he feels sorry for the boy since he is ready to abandon the major task of his life - writing the book on human responsibilities to give his full attention to Eyolf, but when we remember that his intentions are not completely unselfish, empathy seems less significant as a factor causing feeling of guilt; it is more believable that actual awareness of his responsibility in Eyolf's tragic life and afterwards, in his tragic death, is what does not leave him in peace. His decision is a logical and normal reaction to the situation. Many authors like Hoffman, Zahn-waxler, Ferguson, Adams, Robinson and others consider

Conscious guilt to be an exemplar of pro-social emotion because (a) it is rooted in empathic distress for another's suffering and feelings of responsibility for having caused that suffering, and (b) it inhibits aggression and promotes reparative behaviours that restore communal bonds. (Silberschatz 2005:44).

Katchadourian claims the same:

Psychologists now view guilt as an emotion that promotes pro-social effect. It motivates people to admit responsibility for their wrong actions, to make amends and repair damaged relationships. (Katchadourian 2010:75).

So, why is Rita different in this case? Why does she not share the same feelings as Alfred about their son? Before answering these questions, it would be interesting to see how women in general are considered to perceive guilt and conscience.

According to Katchadourian, women are more capable of feeling guilt than men. He explains that women's physiological functions, the way their body is built and tendency of the "sexual *objectification* of the female body" (Katchadourian 2010:157). are the aspects that develop

extreme sensitivity and self-consciousness in them and "leads them to a higher sense of shame." (ibid.). Biological, social and political factors are no less important to consider when we speak about the level of feeling guilty in men and women. Even though "gender identity and gender roles have undergone great changes during the past several decades and continue to change" (ibid.:158), these factors are still relevant while discussing Ibsen's plays considering the reality of 19th century. Perhaps, digging deeper into female sensitivity would be more reasonable in order to find a more universal point that would apply to female nature regardless of time, cultural background or role in political and social environment. I agree with Hatchadourian's opinion that "probably the most important factor that leads women to be more prone to feel guilty is their greater sense of empathy. Women are more sensitive to the feelings of others." (ibid.) Women are considered as main caretakers for their children and not only children but other family members and even people around them. It is mostly the woman's task to bring up a child and do their everyday duties in order to fulfil the needs of others. In most cultures and societies women will feel guilty if they do not cope with their duties. I will quote Katchadourian again:

Traditionally, women have adopted the *expressive* role in being responsive to the needs and feelings of others, particularly their children... Women take on the responsibility of caring for others as an extension of their traditional role in caring for children... When something goes wrong, it leads to a mixture of regret and guilt. In these cases, women are more likely than men to take responsibility for the outcome, even when it is not their fault." (Katchadourian 2010:158-159).

Katchadourian's study of the subject is realistic when as it concerns everyday life; however we should not ignore the fact that a theory or a rule does not equally apply to everyone. And since writers are usually interested in exceptions, it would not be correct to try framing female literary characters into the common characteristics of women.

Ibsen in this case is a rebel against stereotypes and looks into feminine nature from a different angle rather than from the side of motherhood which was the main point for psychoanalysts as well as for most writers while discussing feminine nature in the 19th century. Rita is not the first and only woman in Ibsen's plays with particularly demanding sexual needs, strong personal opinions and a dominating role in relationship. Ibsen's women are always distinguished by their strong personalities, in most cases, they appear to be the leaders of the relationships and even decide the fate of other characters - for the most part the fate of men.

For Rita who as a matter of fact is a woman, wife and mother, not all of her functions are acceptable. The reasons for this have already been discussed in this chapter; however, there are more nuances to take into consideration when it comes to guilt and responsibility. Katchadourian says:

Personal relationships are typically based on family connections and longstanding friendships. They require a high degree of emotional investment. Intimate relationships suggest even closer ties, with hints of romantic and sexual involvement. (Katchadourian 2010:64).

Alfred's and Rita's family clearly lacks the main elements of successful personal relationships. The two almost never share any sentiments, despite Rita's attempts to put romance in their life, Alfred refuses to participate in it: "Du havde champagne, men rørte den ej." (2009:441). Their sexual life is passionate on Rita's side but is more like an unpleasant obligation for Alfred which he tries to avoid when he can. This couple does not look at the same issues in the same way and this according to the scholar, is crucial, when it comes to sharing guilt between husband and wife: "...a general precondition for feeling guilty is that both relationship partners chose a common view about the acceptability of a given behaviour." (Katchadourian 2010:73).

Rita's stubborn attitude that neither she nor Alfred are responsible for their son's handicap can be explained in the following statement: "Certain people with high levels of unconscious guilt may develop strong defences to protect themselves from experiencing it consciously." (Silberschatz 2005:45). This reason becomes more evident when Rita's transformation or change takes place in the end of the play.

At the moment Rita realizes that the drowned child could be her child, she almost faints and screams that someone has to save Eyolf. This is the first sign of her care for the child and is totally unexpected. Later we can see that she cannot find peace, cannot find a place and cannot accept the idea that they have lost Eyolf. She envies Alfred, who can sit still by the fjord.

Uh, - at du kan det!...

Og så sidde stille! På en og samme plet!...

Jeg kan ikke holde det ud nogetsteds, mindst her, - med fjorden lige ind på sig... (2009:468).

Kan du tænke dig den tanke, Alfred, - at vi har mistet Eyolf? (ibid.:469).

Jeg kan ikke. Jeg kan ikke. Og så dette grufulde syn, som vil stå for mig gennem hele livet. (ibid.:470).

Rita is truly horrified by the idea that they will never see Eyolf again, that she will never even see the body of her son and the only thing she has left is to listen to others telling about the last moments of her child and imagine the horrible picture of his death. She cannot help hearing those sinister words: "Kryk-ken fly-der". (2009:516). and cannot help feeling that Eyolf's big, open eyes are looking at her: "Jeg synes, der er store, åbne Øjne, som ser på mig!" (ibid.:510). "Her dead son continues to haunt her in the twin lights of the steamer, which recall Eyolf's open eyes..." (Templeton:158). She is sorry that she took her son's existence for granted. Now she regrets not having loved him because before she knew she could see him any time she wanted, have him around whenever she wished and now, now everything has changed: "...da vidste jeg jo, at jeg kunde få se ham, hvad tid jeg bare vilde." (2009:515).

Rita is sincere and open about her sorrow, about her regrets and the pain that makes Allmers aggressive. In my opinion, the latter is terrified by the fact that Rita's pain is deeper and far more honest than his and that she can admit the truth about her thoughts and emotions more easily than him. Even in such tragic moment, he stays philosophical and retains a logical approach to the events. For example, he says that they have to accustom themselves to the idea that Eyolf is lost for them, he is not haunted by ominous words and dreadful images. Seeing Rita so broken and full of grief, impels him into remorseless judgements towards her and blames her for everything, for Eyolf's accident when he was a baby and now for his death: "Du er skyld i, at han blev, - som han blev! Det er ditt skyld at han ikke kunde berge sig op af vandet." (2009:478). Even though he had promised Rita to look after the sleeping baby, he is sure that it is all Rita's fault. She seduced him in her arms and made him forget about everything. He goes so far as to accuse her that she is not really mourning Eyolf or feeling bereavement because of his death, but that all of this is nothing more than a symptom of a guilty conscience: "Og det, som vi nu går her og kalder for sorg og savn, - det er samvitighedsnag, Rita. Ikke noget andet." (ibid.:479). Different scholars underline these aspects in Rita's and Alfred's dialogue.

The nakedness of Rita's grief, and her tragic insight, prompt Allmers into some of his nastiest self-posturing and sadistic moralizing. His "hardening" towards her and his sustained, cruel desexualization of her are a bitter affront to Rita, but she remains undaunted; she scoffs at his heartless moralism and his windy rhetoric about guilt, atonement, and resurrection. (Reid:10).

Commentators on *Little Eyolf* have noted the marked difference between Alfred's and Rita's reactions to their son's death. Alfred wavers between what John Northam has called "affronted egoism", a kind of resentment against his spoiled place, and metaphysical speculation, while Rita, feeling the death on her pulses, despairs for the boy, for Alfred, and herself. (Templeton:154).

...Alfred not only refuses to accept part of the blame, but places it wholly upon his wife, this time not for wishing, but for causing Eyolf's death. (Templeton:284).

The argument full of accusations and stubborn denial on the part of Alfred of being equally guilty in Eyolf's tragic life and death, makes Rita gain a new perspective of her husband, their relationship and of her own feelings for him. She can see now that the man to whom she gave all her love, so that there was not even a little part left for her child, never deserved such devotion from her. She also feels that this love was not healthy and moral and that she can never look at him again in the same way. "Eyolf's death has revealed to her the narrow, exclusionary love for Alfred that made her neglect her son." (Templeton:158). She finally experiences the power of the "law of change" Alfred was writing and talking about so much: "Der er forvandling i mig nu. Det føler jeg så pinefuldt... det er en slags fødsel i det også." (2009:519).

It is the suppressed *female* desires, which have been rejected and undernourished for a long time, which lead up to the dramatic climax. It is also in Rita's psyche that the often mentioned 'change' takes place towards the very end of the play. (Alnæs 1991:226).

Now Rita is no longer jealous or obsessive; she is aware of her human nature which refuses to die or stop living, but she no longer wants to live only for herself. Rita asks Allmers to stay with her not because she is expecting help from him but because she can help him live.

Rita

Bare for at få beholde dig her hos mig. Sådan i nærheden.

Allmers

Å, jeg kan så lidet hjælpe dig, Rita.

Rita

Men måske jeg kunde hjælpe dig...

... Med at leve livet. (2009:519).

Rita realizes that since both big and little Eyolf have left them, Alfred has no more reason to stay with her but she is not afraid because she has now a new purpose in life. She wants to take care of poor children from the shore; the ones who did not help Eyolf survive. Rita wants to give them what she could not give to her own son - love, care and a future.

Så snart du er rejst fra mig, går jeg ned til stranden og får alle de fattige, forkomne børn med mig her op til vort. Alle de uskikkkkelige gutterne - ...

Ja, det vil jeg. Fra den dag, da du er rejst, skal de være her allesammen, - som om de var mine egne...

Ja, i vår Eyolfs sted. De skal bo i Eyolfs stuer. De skal få læse i hans bøger. Få lege med hans småsager. De skal skiftes til at sidde på hans stol ved bordet. (2009:527).

By doing so Rita wants in her own way to make peace with those big, open eyes and fulfil her responsibilities as a human being. The responsibilities are those Alfred was writing about in his book and that she was all her life trying to avoid:

Jeg hader den bogen endnu. Men jeg sad og hørte på, når du fortalte. Og nu vil jeg prøve mig videre fre selv. På *min* måde...

Jeg vil smigre mig ind hos de store, åbne øjnene, ser du. (2009:530).

Rita's final transformation and her decisions correspond to the theory about guilt. As was already mentioned earlier psychologists observe that guilt usually motivate people to take actions which will correct their previous mistakes or atone for the harm they caused to others.

In this case Rita, after finally realizing her responsibilities towards Eyolf and accepting her guilt, is trying to do the same. Alfred decides to stay and do this noble work with her.

In the end Eyolf's death serves as a catharsis for both characters. Allmers's night dream makes more sense in this context. We can interpret it this way: Eyolf coming out of the water completely healthy and happy symbolizes the rebirth of his parents and their relationship. Since we know that Alfred was basing hopes for his own future on Eyolf's upbringing and equipping him with a good education and skills in order to give him the opportunity to start a new life, it becomes reasonable to think that he, the old Allmers, dies with Eyolf and comes back to life as a new person who is free from the crippled relationships of the past. The fact that Eyolf comes out of the water in his dream is not a coincidence. Water has always been a symbol of renewal, rebirth. This is not the only symbol we meet in the play. Symbols and their meanings in *Little Eyolf* deserve to be studied more carefully.

4.4 Symbols and their meanings in the night dreams in *Little Eyolf*

What is a symbol and why does it have such a special importance when it comes to literature? According to *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1993),

In the broadest sense a symbol is anything which signifies something; in this sense all words are symbols. In discussing literature, however, the term **symbol** is applied to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event which in its turn signifies something, or has a range of reference, beyond itself. (Abrams 1993:206).

There hardly exists a literary work without symbols in it. Symbols are always subject of interest and discussion when it comes to everyday life, art or psychoanalysis, especially when it concerns dream interpretation. Mari Womack notes that the two great psychoanalysts, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung considered that "dreams could be analyzed as symbolic representations of conflict on the individual level." (Womack 2005:23).

Symbols often express more than one could explain with any words. We should not mistake symbols with signs because symbols may have many different meaning. This is why they are so complex and require thorough research in order to correctly understand their meaning in any given context.

Symbols are images, words or behaviours that have multiple levels of meaning. Symbols stand for concepts that are too complex to be stated directly in words.(Womack 2005:1).

Both symbols and signs communicate information through images, words and behaviours. Signs, however, have only one possible meaning, whereas, symbols, by definition, convey multiple levels of meaning at the same time. (ibid.:3).

Symbols are important in Ibsen's works. John Paulsen notes that even though Ibsen disliked implying a double meaning in words, one can always observe that there is much more meaning between the lines of his works than in the sentences alone. He believes that we can find symbols everywhere in his plays, starting from the lines, to the characters and plots.

«Hos Ibsen er alt symboler... Skønt Ibsen selv har protesteret imot, at man lægger en dobbelt mening med i hans ord, og like overfor mig har spottet de kritikere, som vil vise sin sporsans, ved at digte md i hans replikker noget andet og dypere end det enkelte og bokstavelige, Ibsen har skrevet, så kan en uhildet dog ikke være blind for at det sym bolske spiller en stor rolle hos ham, større end hos andre norske forfattere. (Paulsen 1909:88).

Og dette symbolske findes ikke alene i replikkerne (som i dr. Ranks berømte «Tak for ilden», der blir som et billede paa hele den glødende lidenskab, Nora har vakt hos ham), men strækker sig også til handlingen og personerne. Se de «hvide heste» i «Rosmersholm» — «Hjælperne» i «Bygmester Solnæs», Rotte jomfruen (dødsvarsleren) i «Lille Eyolf», «Den fremmede» i «Fruen fra havet» etc. — for ikke at tale om «Vildanden», der er som et eneste stort symbol. (ibid.:89).

As I mentioned in the previous part of this chapter, there are many symbols in *Little Eyolf* that draw our attention. Some of them are directly related to Allmers's dream. One of them is water.

Water has always had special importance in many cultures. This symbol has many different nuances that can vary in meaning, depending on the context. Usually it is linked to rebirth, renewal, purification and life.

Water popularly represents life. It can be associated with birth, fertility, and refreshment. In a Christian context, water has many correlations. Christ walked on water, and transmuted it into WINE, thus these acts can be seen as a transcendence of the earthly condition. Christians are baptized with or in water, symbolizing a purification of the soul, and an admission into the faith. However, water can also be destructive (as in the biblical flood which only Noah and his family escaped); water drowns and erodes, wearing away even the densest of stones given enough time. Water is also one of the FOUR ELEMENTS essential to life in traditional western philosophy; In this form it is represented by undulating lines, or a triangle pointing down. Colors commonly associated with it are BLUE and GREEN. Its qualities are fluidity and cohesiveness. Flowing water usually represents change and the passage of time. (Protas 2001).

Eyolf dies in water and in Allmers's dream he comes out of the water as a new person who is nothing like the crippled little boy he used to be before. He is no longer limited in movement or regarding opportunities for his future. To be more precise about symbols, we should mention that Eyolf drowns in the sea which has a meaning of its own:

The sea, as opposed to the ocean, has known boundaries, and thus can be interpreted as being symbolic of the "known quantities of life." Inasmuch as the sea can symbolize life, a journey across the sea can be seen as a symbolic journey across the "sea of life." (Protas 2001).

Another and the most important symbol in the play is the "eye". I earlier suggested a supposition that when Rita says that she can see the big, open eyes of her dead son day and night, this may well mean that those eyes appear in her night dreams too.

An eye is in many ways one of the most meaningful and significant of all symbols.

Eyes are probably the most important symbolic sensory organ. They can represent clairvoyance, omniscience, and/or a gateway into the soul. Other qualities that eyes are commonly associated with are: intelligence, light, vigilance, moral

conscience, and truth. Looking someone in the eye is a western custom of honesty. In this way covering of the eyes, by wearing a helmet, sunglasses, etc. can mean mystery, not seeing the complete truth, or deceit. However, in other cultural contexts the obscuring of the eyes can convey respect (Asian) or modesty and submission (many middle eastern women wear VEILS for this purpose). The eye often means judgment and authority. Jung considers its original symbol as the eternal bosom with the pupil its 'child.' It is the place where love begins. (Protas 2001).

Anne Marie Rekdal presents a very interesting study of the name "Eyolf". She notices that two parts of this name have meanings of significant concepts in the play: the "eye" and a "wolf".

Navnet "Eyolf" knytter forbindelsen mellom navn og øyne. Etymologisk går *Eyolf* tilbake til framstavingen øy(e)- og etterstavingen -olf (-ulv). Øye- og det å se henger sammen med blikk og det å bli sett, mens -olf/-ulv knytter Eyolf til Rottejomfroen, som Allmers vet også heter frøken Varg. (Rekdal 2008:364).

Reid also underlines the importance of the eye symbol in *Little Eyolf*. He draws parallels between Ibsen's poetic world and Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy* and considers that "the semiotic significance of Eyolf's wide-open eyes is that they must take on this awful ambivalence, including "both the fair world of Apollo, and its substratum, the terrible wisdom of Silenus..." He thinks that Eyolf with his wide-open eyes is an allusion for the *Birth of Tragedy* which says: "to lie still like a mirror so that the great sky might be reflected in them". (Reid:4).

Eyes can have different symbolic meanings. In the play they haunt Rita. She sees them everywhere and always, they are looking at her as if they knew everything, even her deepest secrets:

Forskjellen mellom øyne som objekter og blikk betegner det karakteristiske ved øyne. De er på den ene siden objekter som kan ses, og de kan se tilbake på den som ser og reflektere at de blir sett. (Rekdal 2008:364).

I Ritas hallusinerende tilstand er øynene både objekt som kan ses og blick som ser, både objekt og subjekt, og slik framstår kjente virkelighetsstrukturer i oppløsning." (ibid.:365).

These eyes are reminders of her selfishness and guilt: "The drowned Eyolf lay under the water with his eyes open, and Rita is haunted by the "big open eyes" that signal both perennial accusation and utter irretrievability." (Templeton:283).

Open eyes are often mentioned in Rita's and Alfred's conversations. They are asking for answers and this is what pushes Rita to the final catharsis and the big decision to take care of poor children as if they were her own.

De åpne øynene brukes som et ledemotiv i samtalen mellom de sørgende foreldrene både i annen og tredje akt... for Rita blir forestillingen om det døde barnets øyne et foruroligende element, en påminnelse om (deres) hennes skyld, og (de) hun kan få fred bare ved å forsone seg med øynene. I Ritas tilfelle blir dette mulig ved at hun bestemmer seg for å vise omsorg for de fattige barna nede ved bryggen, ta dem til seg, i Eyolfs sted. Hun gjør det for å "smigre mig ind hos de store, åbne øjnene, ser du". (2009:374).

There is one interesting nuance about eyes in the play. Rita mentions the evil eye of a child before Eyolf's death and this becomes a subject of reproach to her by Alfred. He claims that she damned Eyolf by saying this and blames her for his death: Da Allmers konfronterer Rita med spørsmålet: "Var de onde, de øjnene, Rita?", driver han frem en tilsynelatende logisk argumentasjon for at Eyolf druknet fordi Rita ønsket det." (Rekdal 2008:365). But what the "evil eye" can really stand for is the reminder of their failure as parents: "Certainly the "evil eye" of this play indicts the adults for their initial, primal transgression." (Weinstein:303).

There is one more symbol that is not related to the dreams but is worth mentioning. It is the water lilies. Rekdal associates them with the indirect implication of Asta's sexual desire for Alfred.

Innsikten i sin egen begjærsposisjon artikulerer Asta symbolsk med vannliljebuketten ved slutten av 2. akt. Den hvite vannliljen som på norsk også heter nøkkerose... er med sine hvite blomster bærer av renhet og skjønnhet, men blomstens utseende, med den gulhvite skålen av kronblad og den oppreiste

støvbæreren, gjør at vannliljen assosieres til kvinnelige genitalier og erotiske begjer. Vannliljen er festet til dypet der nøkken som lokker unge kvinner holder til, og den er bærer av de hemmelige, farlige understrømmer som peker i retning av erotisk begjær. (Rekdal 2008:367).

4.5 Conclusion

The night dream in *Little Eyolf* is once again a starting point from which major changes in relationships between characters are made as well as revealing the deepest and darkest secrets which is followed by confession. The dream also plays an important role in the development of the plot. In the beginning we have secrets and unspoken desires or feelings. The death of the child is followed by sorrow and a bad conscience which forces the characters to face the need for changes and for the telling of the truth. However, only after Allmers dreams of Eyolf, do the ideas about what kind of changes must be done or what has been hanging like a heavy stone on the conscience of the major characters become clear and obvious. Saying the truth even though it brings to light their darkest and shameful sides becomes easier and the way out of the grief and shame starts to show a way which can not only help the characters to justify to themselves that they are living, but give a meaning to their existence; a higher meaning than it had before. They find a way to pay for their mistakes and forgive themselves and come together, maybe not with their previous passions and ideals but with something useful, something less selfish than only caring about their own interests.

The night dream appears to be a picture of their subconscious, of something they are afraid of, of something they try to avoid facing. Once the dream is there, once Almers has seen it, he can no longer hide it from the eyes that see everything, he can no longer refuse the argument that his only son is a victim of his and his wife's selfishness. He is forced to talk to Rita about subjects they have been trying not to touch for years even though those subjects never abandoned their thoughts and in a way poisoned their relationship. Once Eyolf is gone, their subconscious fears and dark wishes seem to have come true in a sinister way. However, on the other hand, they have a chance to start a new life, a life in which they do not have to carry the burden of being parents of a child they cannot love as he deserves to be loved, a child, who was crippled because of his parents' carelessness. Eyolf, who was a kind of sick symbol of

unhealthy feelings between brother and sister, as well as of unreasonable jealousy on the wife's side towards her husband, is now removed. With his existence he somehow became a concentration of sick and unhealthy relationships even though he was guiltless and with his death he took away the guilt of others.

The death of the child symbolizes his parents malfunction as a couple. Their relationship is crooked and Eyolf inherits this crookedness from them which is expressed in his lameness. Rita's and Alfred's relationship cannot continue the way it started and when it came to the day of Eyolf's death, it needs a great change. They cannot be parents because their family is like a sick tree which is either incapable of giving fruit or the fruit it gives is not good and healthy enough to reach a state of ripeness. The child represents the decay of his parents' relationship and he is dying as the family built on false and self-interest must come to an end. Allmers more or less realizes this as well as Rita. She is followed by the vision of her child's eyes and they awake her feeling of having a bad conscience and guilt. For Allmers this happens through a night dream. However, as both of them confess and reach the conclusion that, the eyes that have been following them night and day are not evil. They do not mean to harm them but the opposite. By facing their fears, secrets and darkness, husband and wife are able to find a way out of that darkness and free their heavy conscious. The dream pushes them to go through a catharsis and to prepare for a new life.

General Summing up and Conclusion

In my thesis I have presented the study of the importance of night dreams in Henrik Ibsen's plays *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf*. I have focused on different aspects of the use of night dreams in these plays such as their situation in the text and what significance it has for the plot; what role they play for the characters and way in which they affect their choices and decisions; how night dreams help us to explore and understand the characters' conscious and subconscious thoughts and wishes and their moral state; how they are related to the reality in which the characters find themselves; the meaning they carry; the meaning of the symbols found in them; how the night dreams in Ibsen's plays correspond to the Theory of Psychoanalysis; and what the use of night dreams says about the author.

The research showed that the night dreams in both texts are situated in the very parts where the plot becomes most complex because of the events that take place before the characters dream. In *The Vikings of Helgelad* the dream occurs when important secrets are revealed and the reality changes completely for the characters. What seemed to be true before then appears to be a lie and the whole life before that moment becomes false. The dream here is a kind of prism through which the past is transformed into the future. This can be understood as a prediction of the future since the dream shows one of the future events. Considering Gunnar's dream as a prediction seems natural if we take into consideration the fact that the play is based on Icelandic sagas and that it respects their features. However, farther investigation of different elements in the dream leads me to the conclusion that Gunnar's dream is a psychological portrait of the character, as well as a deeply analytical interpretation of the reality and of Hjørdis's personality. It contains a great deal of information about Gunnar's psychological and moral state and beliefs. Thus this dream becomes a great example of how a night dream can tell more about a person than we could understand from his actions and thoughts that occur during his waking life. After the dream has been presented in the play the story moves to its final and decisive events. Hence the dream takes place when the conflict has reached its zenith. I must point out that hearing about the content of the dream motivates Hjørdis to change her intention of killing Sigurd and gives this task to her husband which proves my statement about the dream's influence on the decisions and actions of the characters.

The same can be said about the dreams in *Little Eyolf*. The dream occurs when the culmination is reached which is the death of Eyolf. After this has happened, secrets and hidden truth start to rise to the surface and the characters begin to be more honest and open about their real desires and the reasons for what they did before. The night dream in the play concerns the death of the boy but it gives information not only about Alfred Allmers's reaction to his son's death but about his personal crisis and his desperate search and hope for a solution to the situation in his life. We can also see how much Allmers wants to reject the reality which has just killed his last aim and purpose in life and left him bare and unprotected against the bitter truth. The dream is the start of a complicated and painful dialogue between husband and wife. At the end of this dialogue Rita becomes transformed and finds an unselfish reason to go on living, Allmers joins her in this new plan for the future. Again, we can see that after the dream has occurred and has revealed the characters' subconscious desires and wishes, crucial changes take place and the characters make their final decisions. The dream of Alfred Allmers' is a perfect example of wish fulfilment that Freud discussed in his theory concerning dream interpretation.

The night dream in *Little Eyolf* is charged with symbolic meanings. Ibsen uses symbols that add sense and power to the content of the dream. Understanding those symbols helps to create a broader vision of what the dream might be telling us, as it opens the possibility for new interpretations of the various elements in it.

Studying the night dreams in *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Little Eyolf* made it obvious that they perfectly correspond to the Theory of Psychoanalysis as they present a complex picture of the characters' thoughts, wishes, problems, moral situation and state of mind both at the conscious and at the subconscious level. One can analyze each character and learn a lot regarding him from his night dream. I believe that psychoanalysts could greatly benefit from Ibsen's plays in their research and studies regarding the relationship between the human mind and psychology and night dreams. This aspect adds value to Henrik Ibsen's works.

The way Ibsen uses night dreams tells us much about him too as a writer and of his knowledge of psychology. He proves to be knowledgeable concerning the human mind and nature and we can see that he skilfully puts this knowledge to use in his plays. There are not many plays of his that contain night dreams but when he chooses to place a dream in a text, he perfectly knows where, how and in which form to present it so that the dream becomes a powerful and meaningful instrument that makes the plot, the development of the events and

the emotional involvement of the readers even stronger and more enchanting. The research proves that Henrik Ibsen never inserts night dreams in his plays without giving them a special meaning and function. It also becomes clear that he does not believe in the prophetic qualities of night dreams and sees them as a reflection of a person's conscious and subconscious mind. In my opinion, these details tell us more about Henrik Ibsen as a great writer, thinker and an expert of human psychology.

To conclude, night dreams in Henrik Ibsen's plays are immensely important for a full and comprehensive understanding of the real meaning of the texts and for drawing complete psychological portraits of the characters.

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